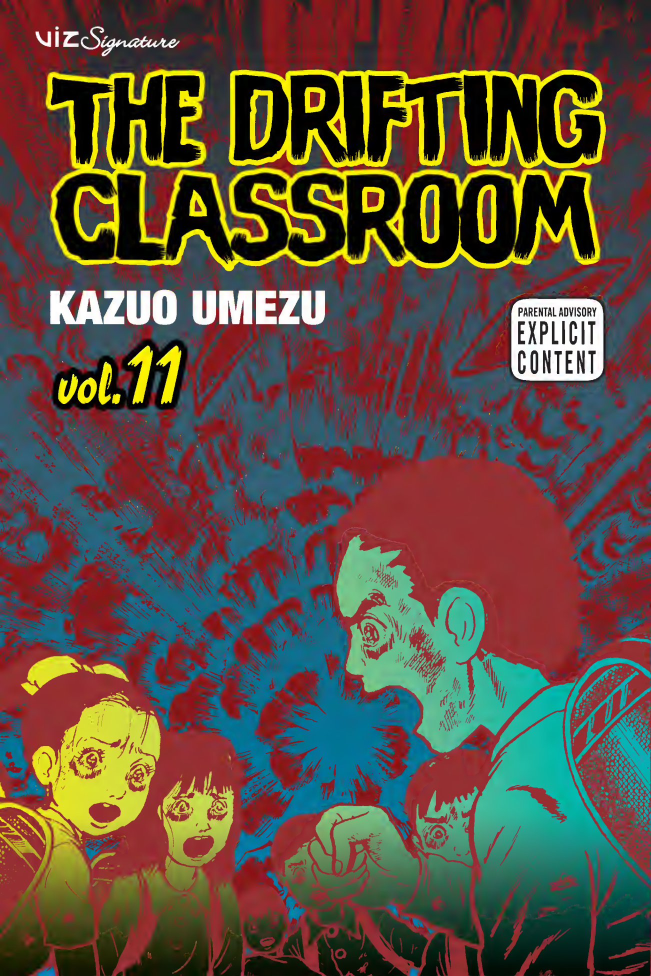
VIZ Signature

# THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM

## KAZUO UMEZU

vol. 11


PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Born in 1936, Kazuo Umezu is Japan's most respected and influential horror manga artist. Umezu began his artistic career at the age of 18, creating stories for both *shôjo* (girls) and *shonen* (boys) manga magazines, and working in an amazingly diverse range of genres. In Japan he is most famous for the gag manga *Makoto-chan* (1971), but his most ambitious works are horror and science fiction, including *The Drifting Classroom* (1972-1974), *My Name is Shingo* (1982-1986), *The Left Hand of God, the Right Hand of the Devil* (1986-1989) and *Fourteen* (1990-1995). His works have been adapted into anime and live-action films.**

# THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM
## Vol. 11

### STORY AND ART BY KAZUO UMEZU

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Editor in Chief, Magazines/Marc Weidenbaum
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VP of Sales/Gonzalo Ferreyra
Sr. VP of Marketing/Liza Coppola
Publisher/Hyoe Narita

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, April 2008

www.viz.com
store.viz.com

**PARENTAL ADVISORY**
THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM is rated M for Mature and is recommended for mature readers. Contains strong language and graphic violence.
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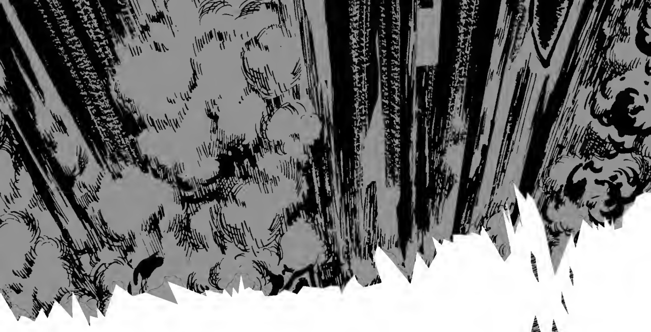
# THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM

## vol. 11

KAZUO UMEZU



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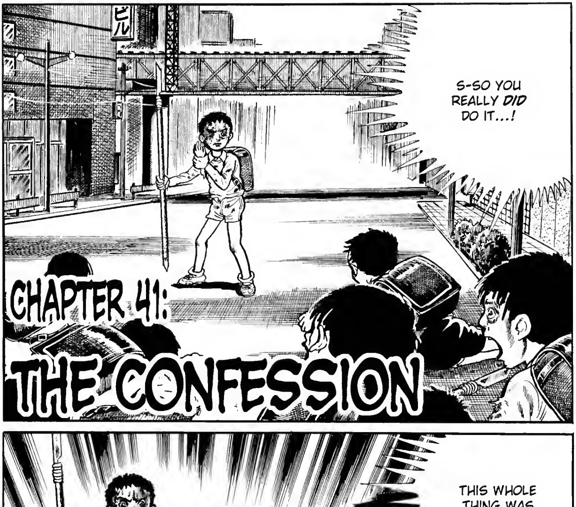
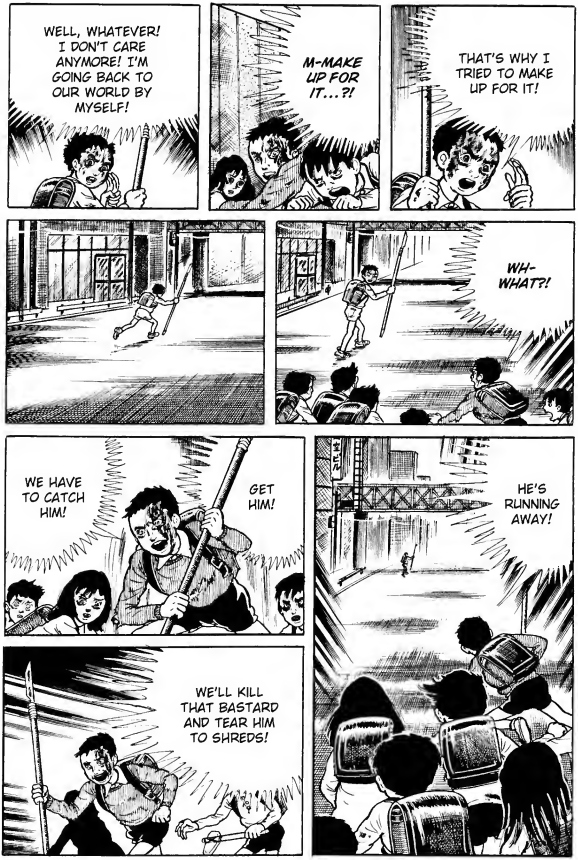
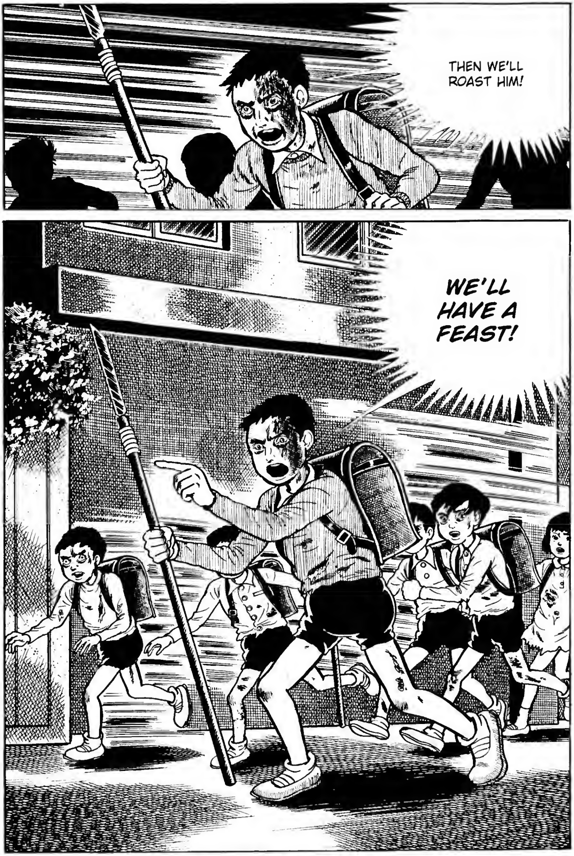
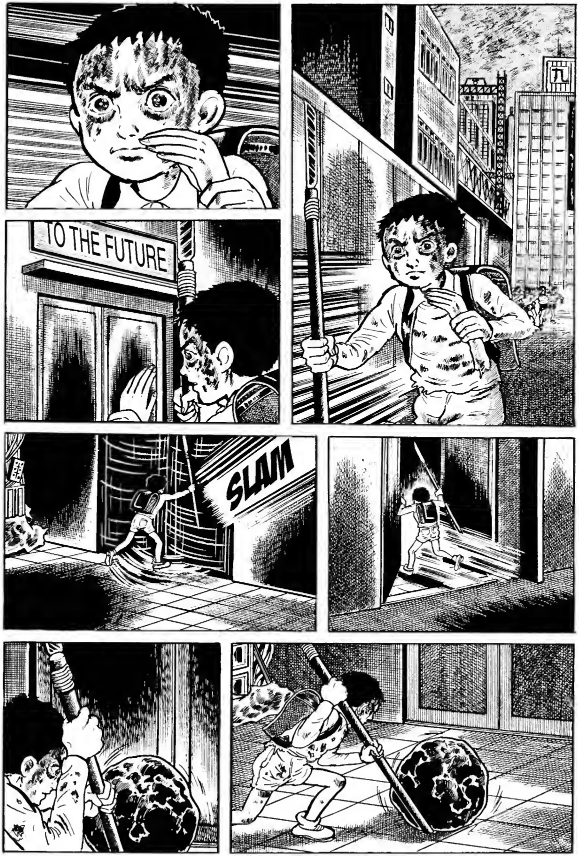
**The Nightmarish Imagination: An Essay - - 179**

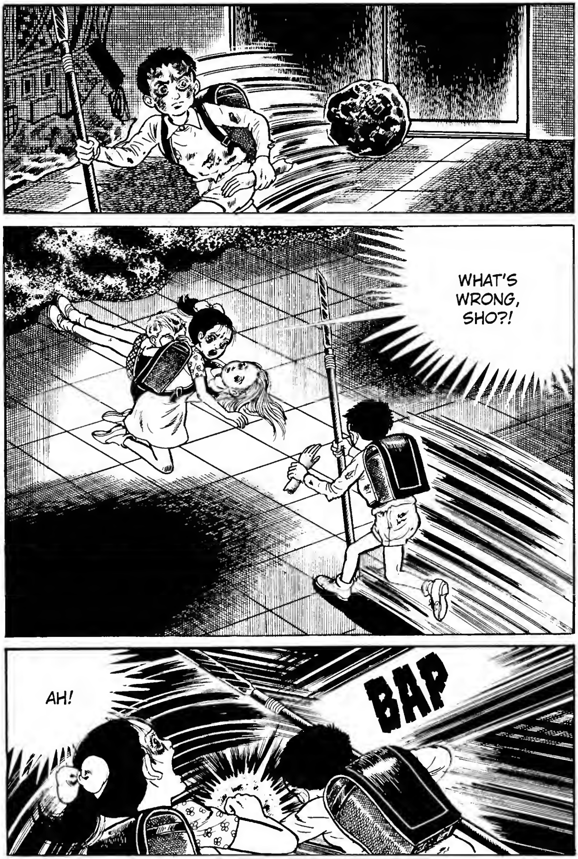
# CHAPTER 41:
# THE CONFESSION

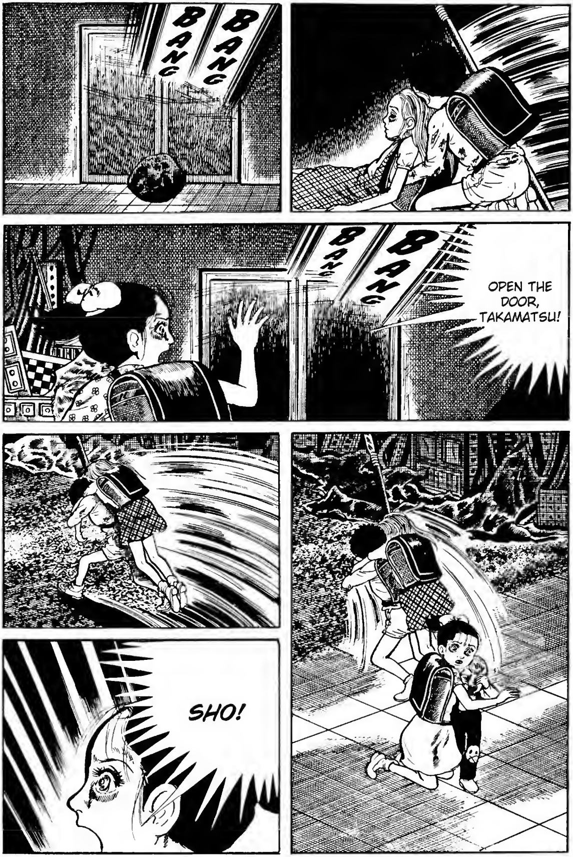

ビル
S-SO YOU REALLY *DID* DO IT...!
THIS WHOLE THING WAS YOUR FAULT...?!
THAT'S RIGHT!
I DID IT!
I SET OFF THE DYNAMITE! THAT'S WHAT SENT US INTO THE FUTURE!

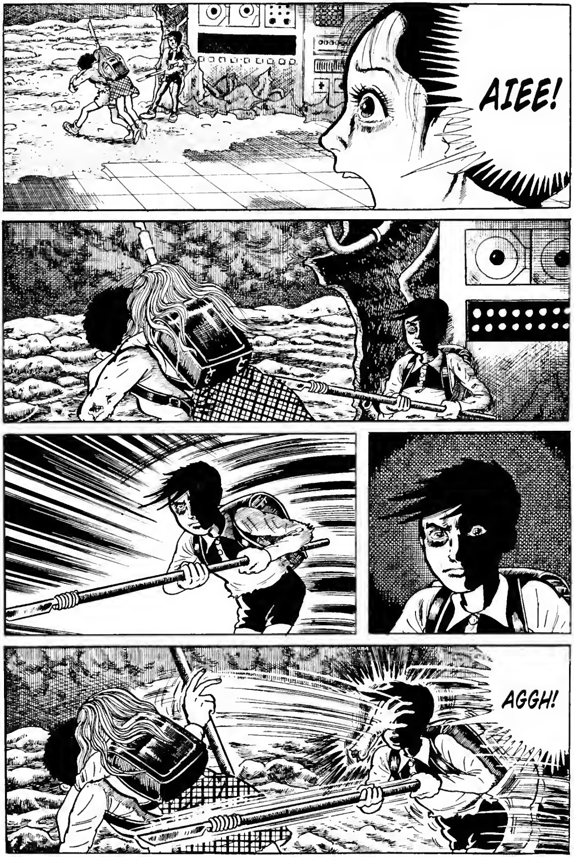

WELL, WHATEVER! I DON'T CARE ANYMORE! I'M GOING BACK TO OUR WORLD BY MYSELF!
M-MAKE UP FOR IT...?!
THAT'S WHY I TRIED TO MAKE UP FOR IT!
WH-WHAT?!
WE HAVE TO CATCH HIM!
GET HIM!
HE'S RUNNING AWAY!
WE'LL KILL THAT BASTARD AND TEAR HIM TO SHREDS!

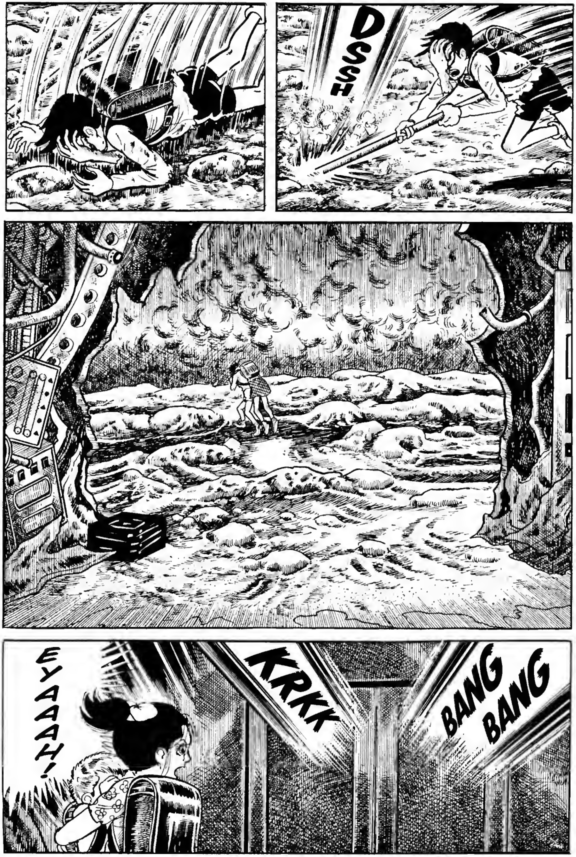

THEN WE'LL ROAST HIM!
WE'LL HAVE A FEAST!

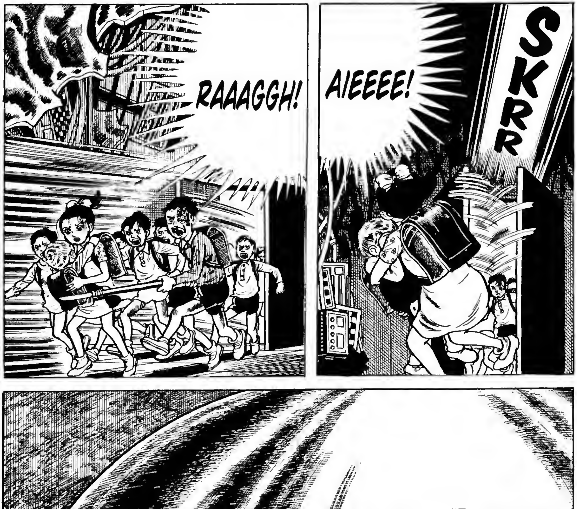

九
TO THE FUTURE
SLAM

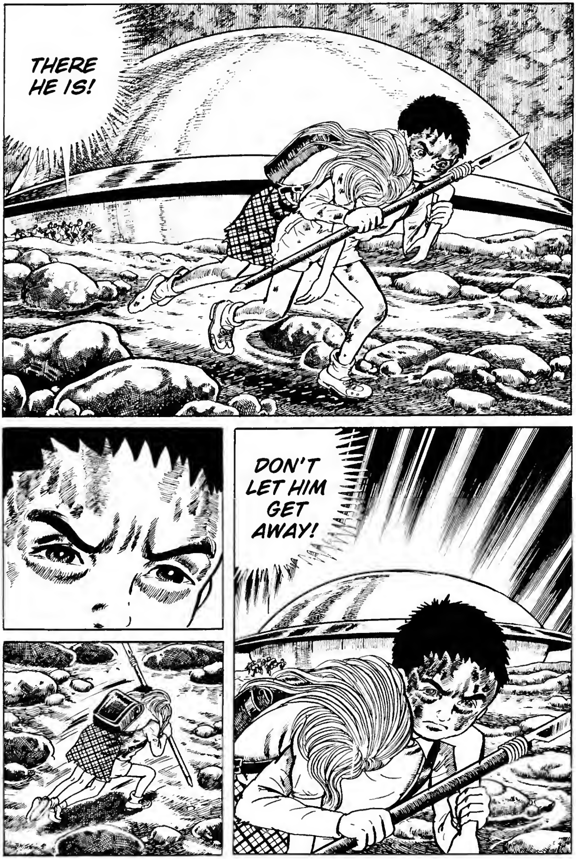

WHAT'S WRONG, SHO?!
BAP
AH!

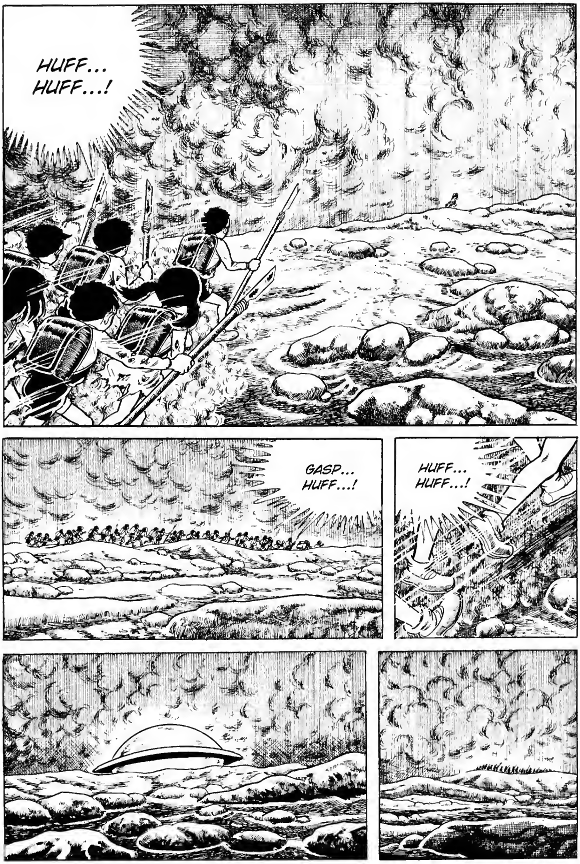

BANG
BANG
OPEN THE DOOR, TAKAMATSU!
BANG
BANG
SHO!

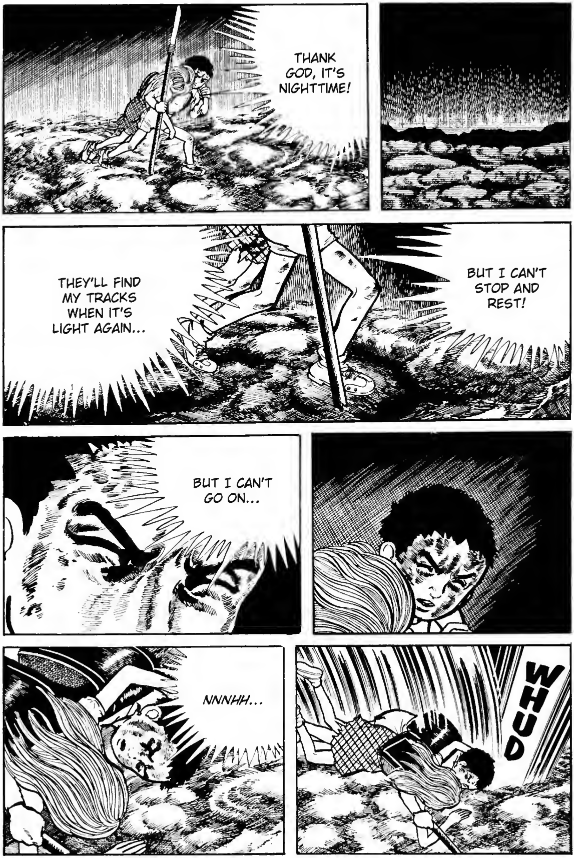

AIEE!
AGGH!

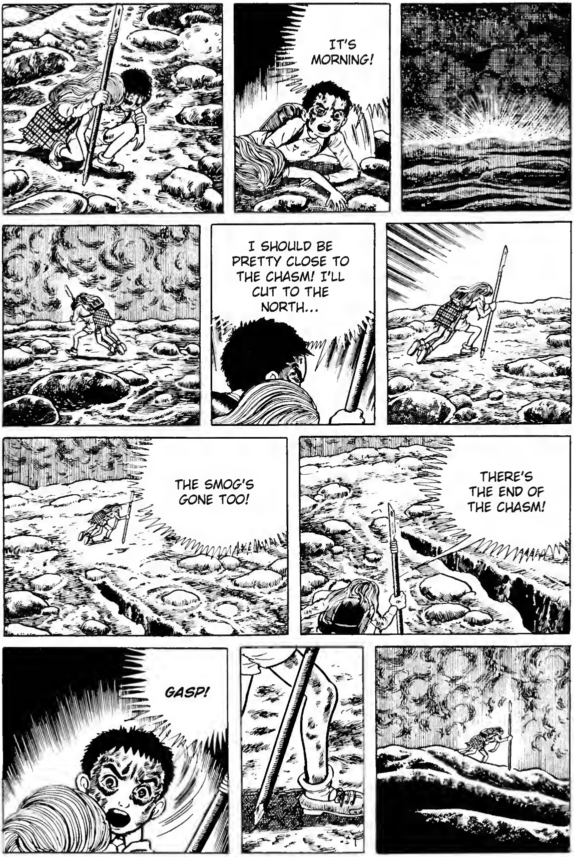

DSSH
BANG BANG
KRKK
EYAAAH!

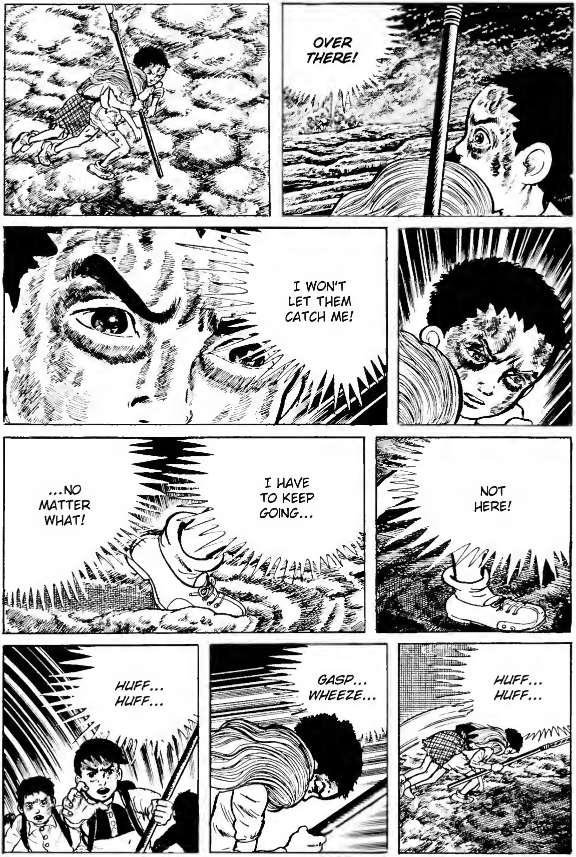

RAAAGGH!
AIEEEE!
SKRR

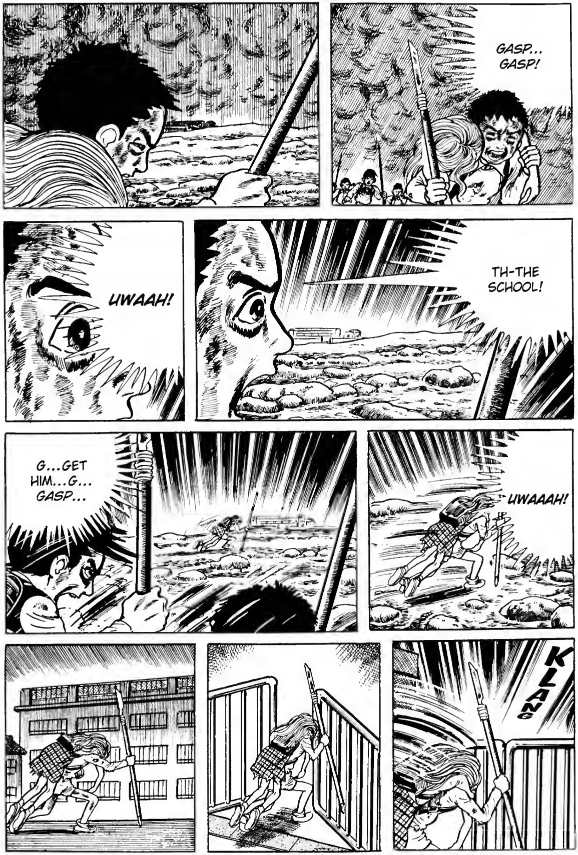

THERE HE IS!
DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

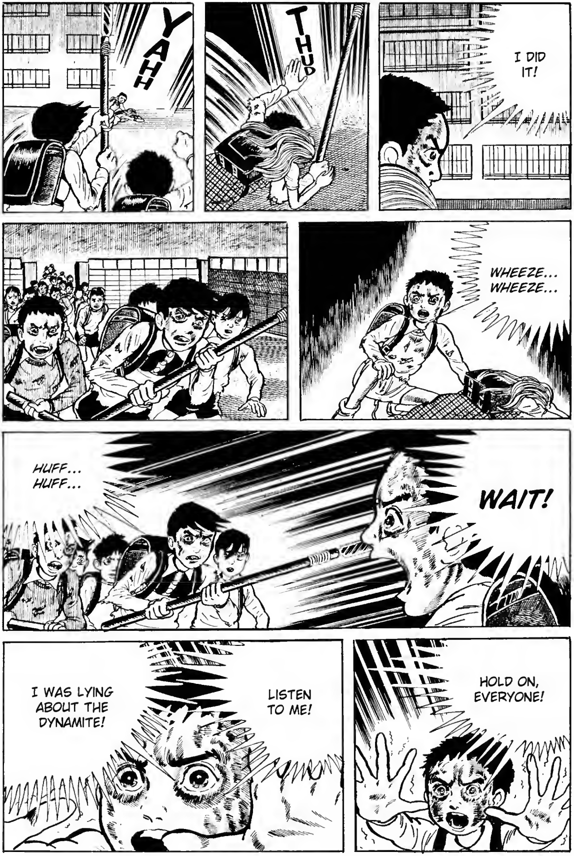

HUFF... HUFF...!
HUFF... HUFF...!
GASP... HUFF...!

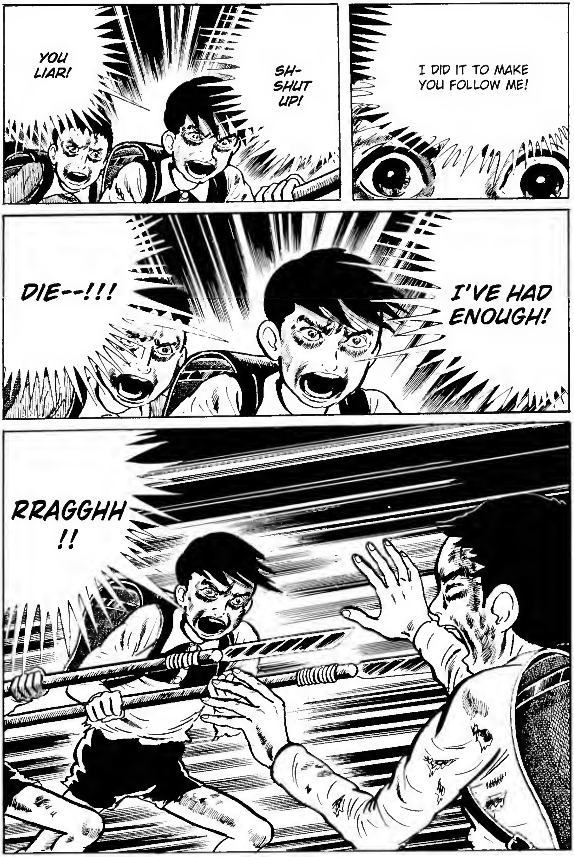

THANK GOD, IT'S NIGHTTIME!
THEY'LL FIND MY TRACKS WHEN IT'S LIGHT AGAIN...
BUT I CAN'T STOP AND REST!
BUT I CAN'T GO ON...
NNNHH...
WHUD

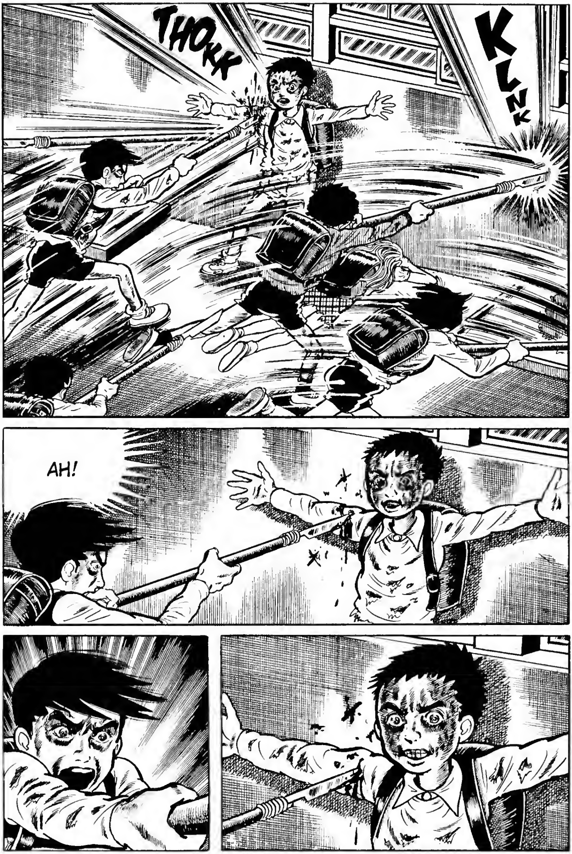

IT'S MORNING!
I SHOULD BE PRETTY CLOSE TO THE CHASM! I'LL CUT TO THE NORTH...
THE SMOG'S GONE TOO!
THERE'S THE END OF THE CHASM!
GASP!

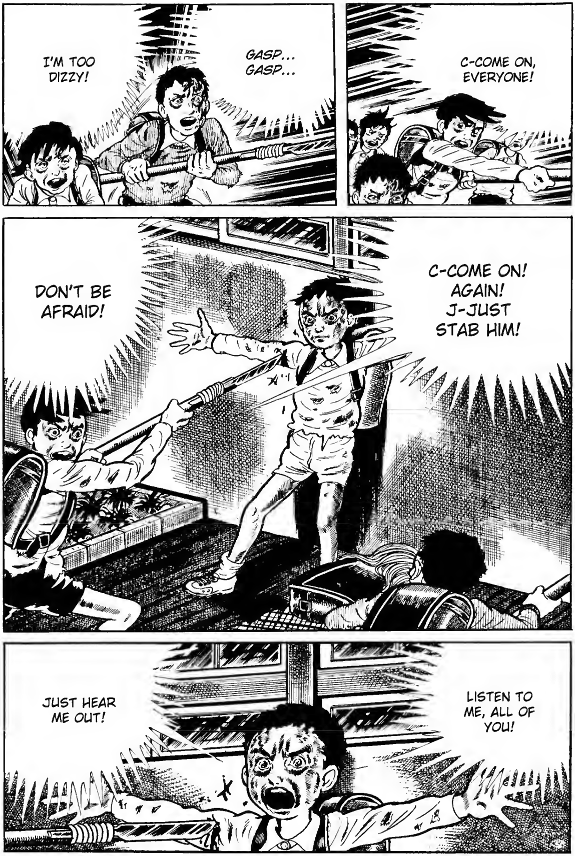

OVER THERE!
I WON'T LET THEM CATCH ME!
NOT HERE!
I HAVE TO KEEP GOING...
...NO MATTER WHAT!
HUFF... HUFF...
GASP... WHEEZE...
HUFF... HUFF...

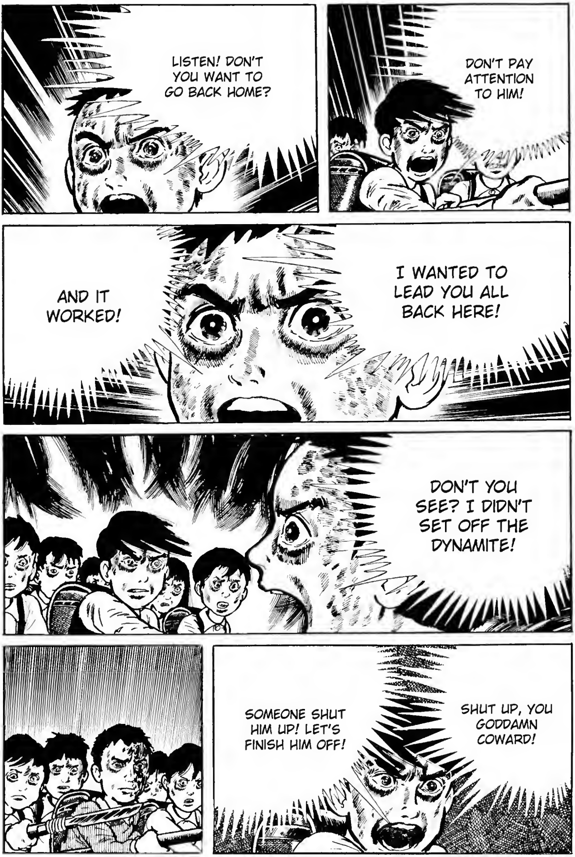

GASP... GASP!
UWAAH!
TH-THE SCHOOL!
G...GET HIM...G... GASP...
UWAAAH!
KLANG

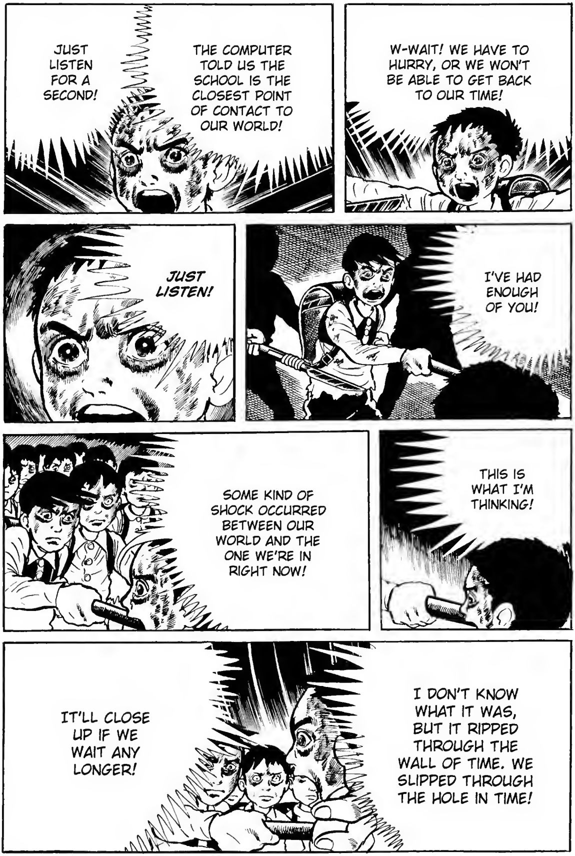

YAHH
THUD
I DID IT!
WHEEZE... WHEEZE...
HUFF... HUFF...
WAIT!
HOLD ON, EVERYONE!
LISTEN TO ME!
I WAS LYING ABOUT THE DYNAMITE!

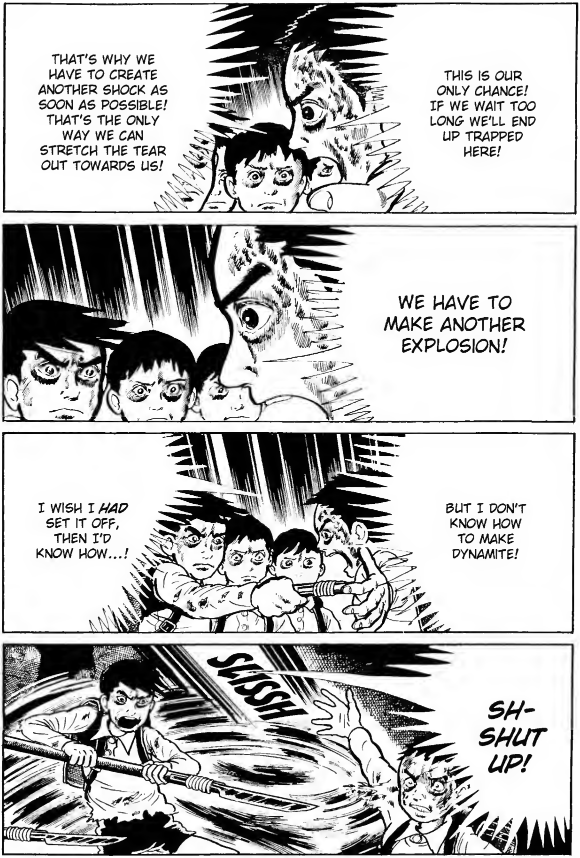

YOU LIAR!
SH-SHUT UP!
I DID IT TO MAKE YOU FOLLOW ME!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
DIE--!!!
RRAGGHH!!

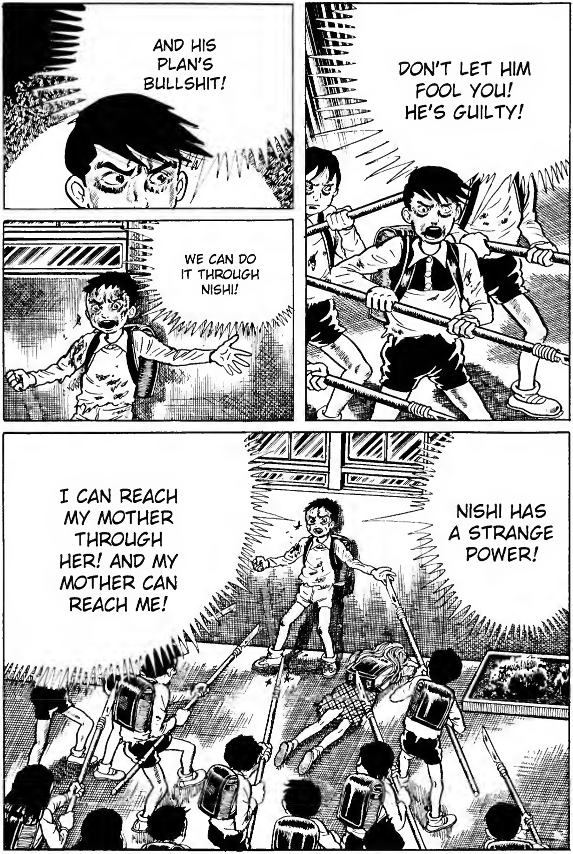

KLUNK
THOKK
AH!

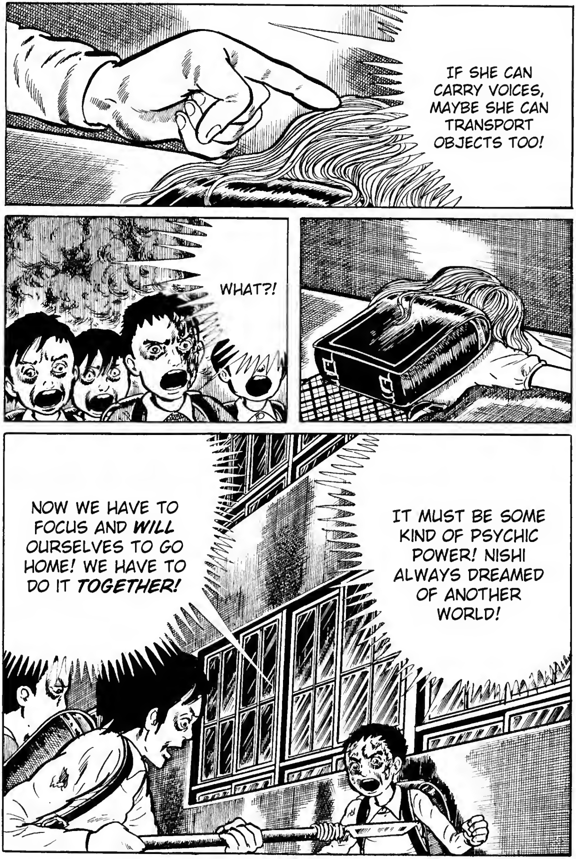

GASP... GASP...
I'M TOO DIZZY!
C-COME ON, EVERYONE!
C-COME ON! AGAIN! J-JUST STAB HIM!
DON'T BE AFRAID!
LISTEN TO ME, ALL OF YOU!
JUST HEAR ME OUT!

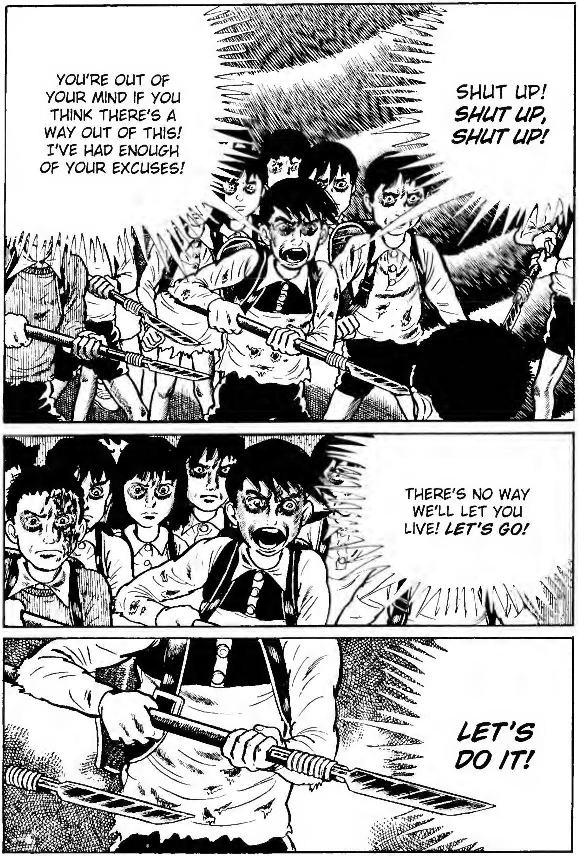

LISTEN! DON'T YOU WANT TO GO BACK HOME?
DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO HIM!
I WANTED TO LEAD YOU ALL BACK HERE!
AND IT WORKED!
DON'T YOU SEE? I DIDN'T SET OFF THE DYNAMITE!
SHUT UP, YOU GODDAMN COWARD!
SOMEONE SHUT HIM UP! LET'S FINISH HIM OFF!

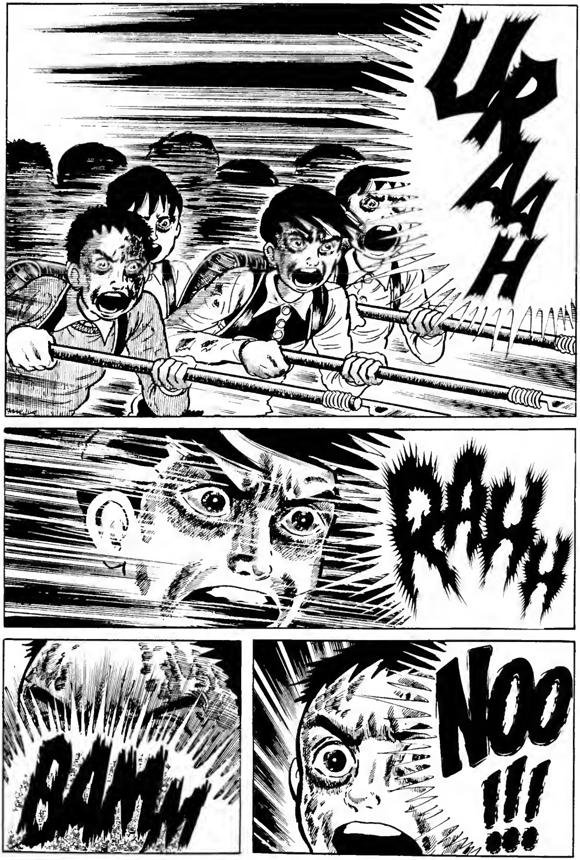

W-WAIT! WE HAVE TO HURRY, OR WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET BACK TO OUR TIME!
THE COMPUTER TOLD US THE SCHOOL IS THE CLOSEST POINT OF CONTACT TO OUR WORLD!
JUST LISTEN FOR A SECOND!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU!
JUST LISTEN!
THIS IS WHAT I'M THINKING!
SOME KIND OF SHOCK OCCURRED BETWEEN OUR WORLD AND THE ONE WE'RE IN RIGHT NOW!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS, BUT IT RIPPED THROUGH THE WALL OF TIME. WE SLIPPED THROUGH THE HOLE IN TIME!
IT'LL CLOSE UP IF WE WAIT ANY LONGER!

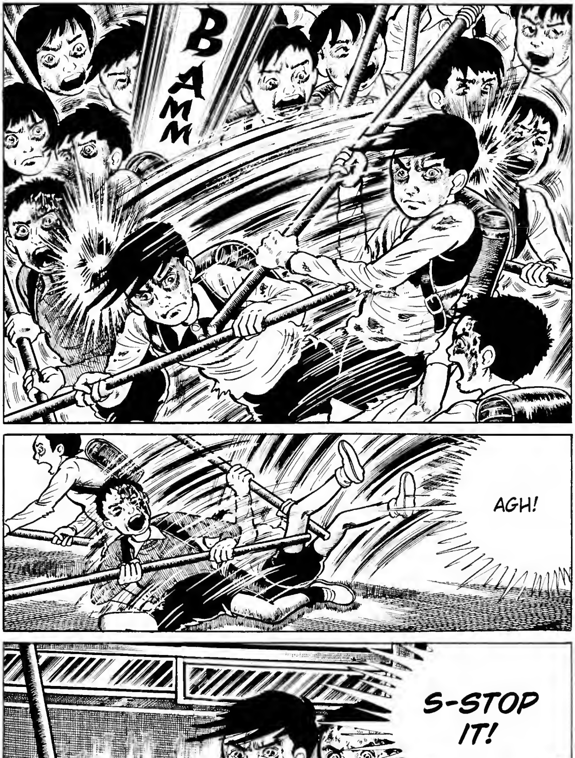

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO CREATE ANOTHER SHOCK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! THAT'S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN STRETCH THE TEAR OUT TOWARDS US!
THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE! IF WE WAIT TOO LONG WE'LL END UP TRAPPED HERE!
WE HAVE TO MAKE ANOTHER EXPLOSION!
I WISH I *HAD* SET IT OFF, THEN I'D KNOW HOW...!
BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE DYNAMITE!
SLISSH
SH-SHUT UP!

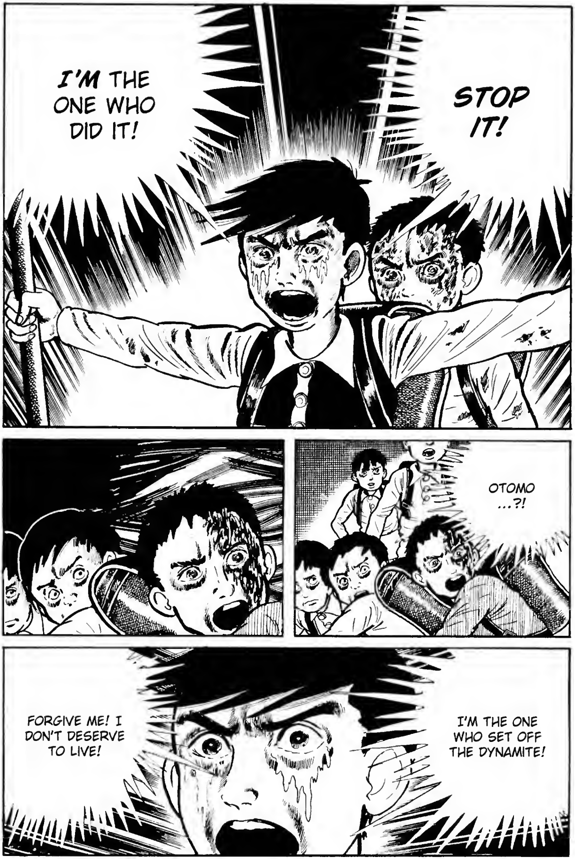

AND HIS PLAN'S BULLSHIT!
DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU! HE'S GUILTY!
WE CAN DO IT THROUGH NISHI!
I CAN REACH MY MOTHER THROUGH HER! AND MY MOTHER CAN REACH ME!
NISHI HAS A STRANGE POWER!

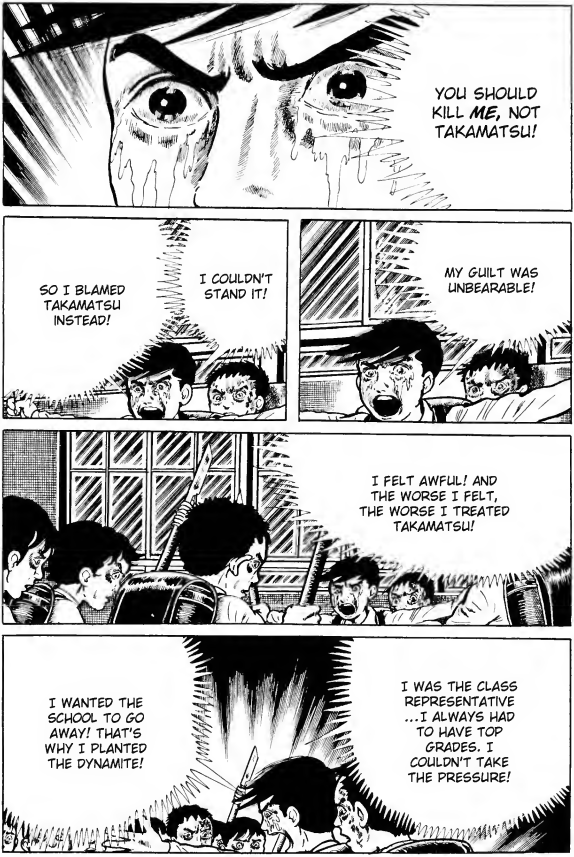

IF SHE CAN CARRY VOICES, MAYBE SHE CAN TRANSPORT OBJECTS TOO!
WHAT?!
IT MUST BE SOME KIND OF PSYCHIC POWER! NISHI ALWAYS DREAMED OF ANOTHER WORLD!
NOW WE HAVE TO FOCUS AND *WILL* OURSELVES TO GO HOME! WE HAVE TO DO IT *TOGETHER!*

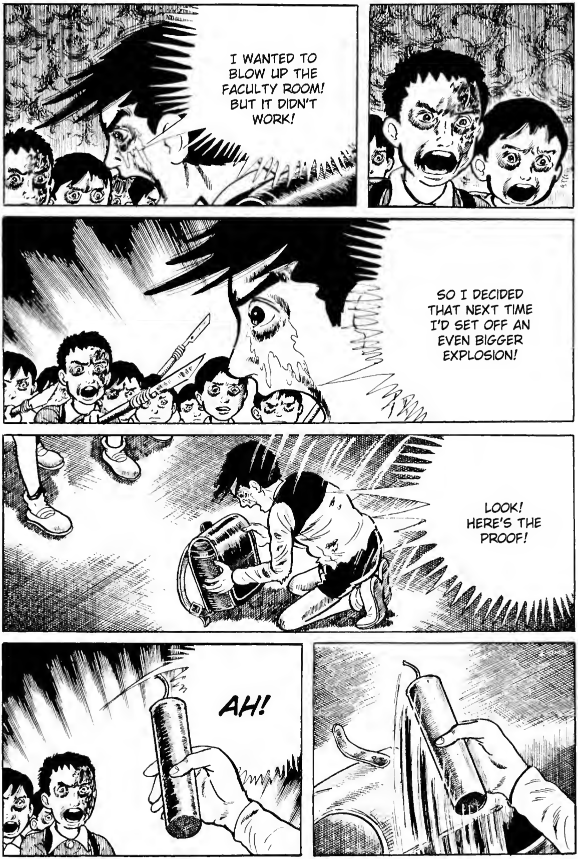

SHUT UP! *SHUT UP, SHUT UP!*
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND IF YOU THINK THERE'S A WAY OUT OF THIS! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR EXCUSES!
THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL LET YOU LIVE! *LET'S GO!*
*LET'S DO IT!*

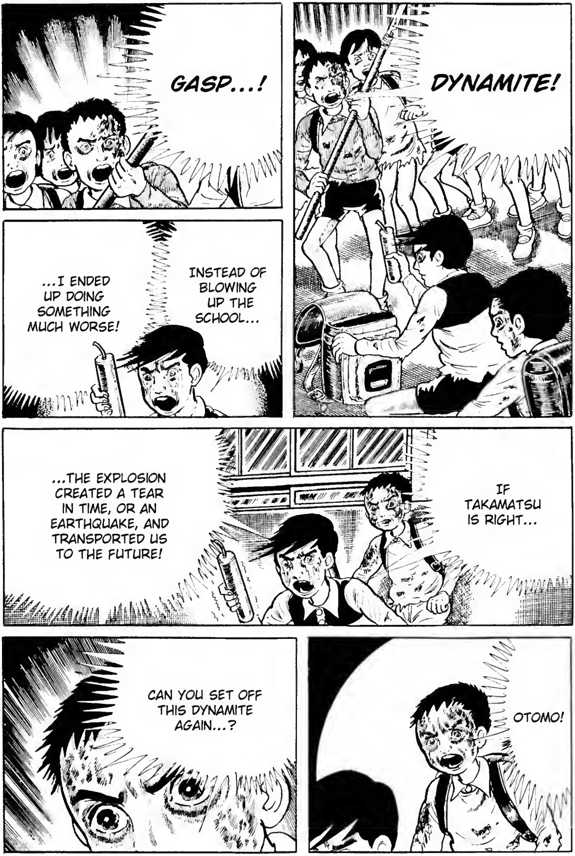

URAAH
AAAAAAAH
RAAHH
NOO!!!
BAAM

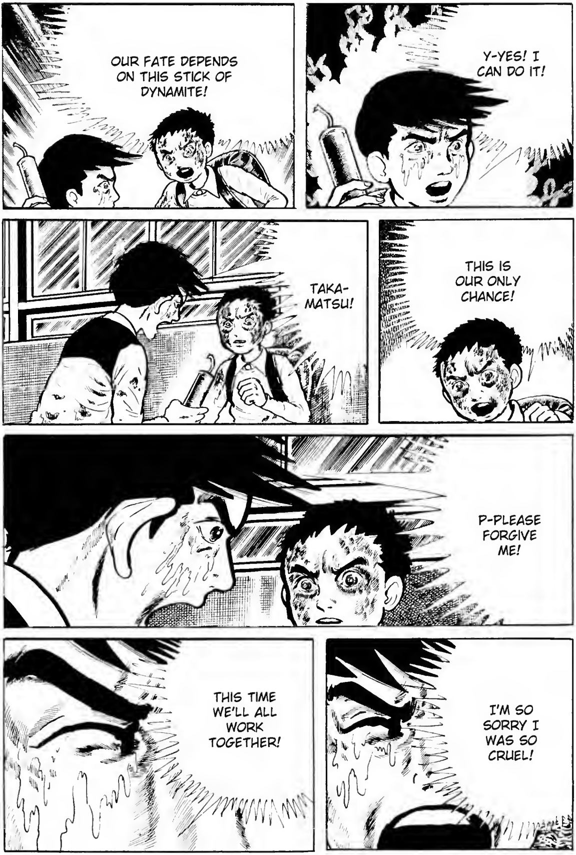

BAMM
AGH!
S-STOP IT!

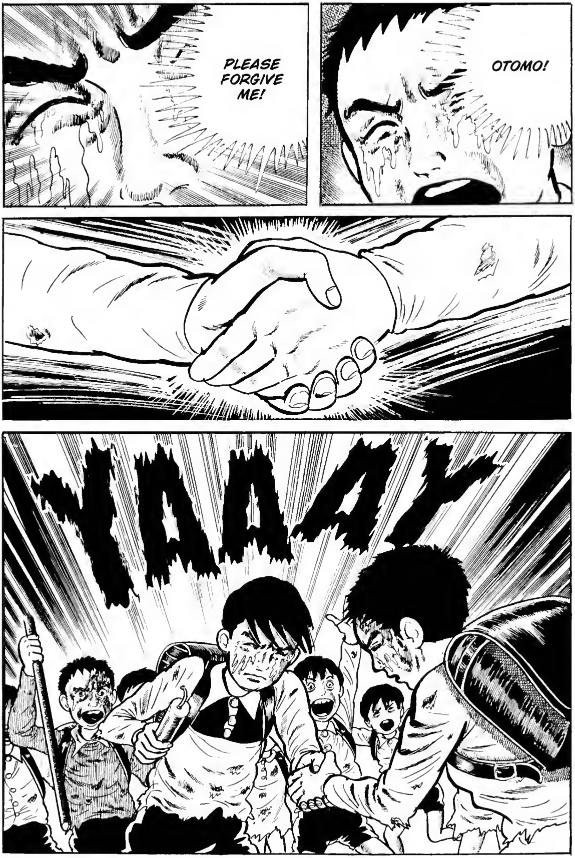

STOP IT!
I'M THE ONE WHO DID IT!
OTOMO ...?!
I'M THE ONE WHO SET OFF THE DYNAMITE!
FORGIVE ME! I DON'T DESERVE TO LIVE!


YOU SHOULD KILL *ME,* NOT TAKAMATSU!
MY GUILT WAS UNBEARABLE!
I COULDN'T STAND IT!
SO I BLAMED TAKAMATSU INSTEAD!
I FELT AWFUL! AND THE WORSE I FELT, THE WORSE I TREATED TAKAMATSU!
I WAS THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE ...I ALWAYS HAD TO HAVE TOP GRADES. I COULDN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE!
I WANTED THE SCHOOL TO GO AWAY! THAT'S WHY I PLANTED THE DYNAMITE!

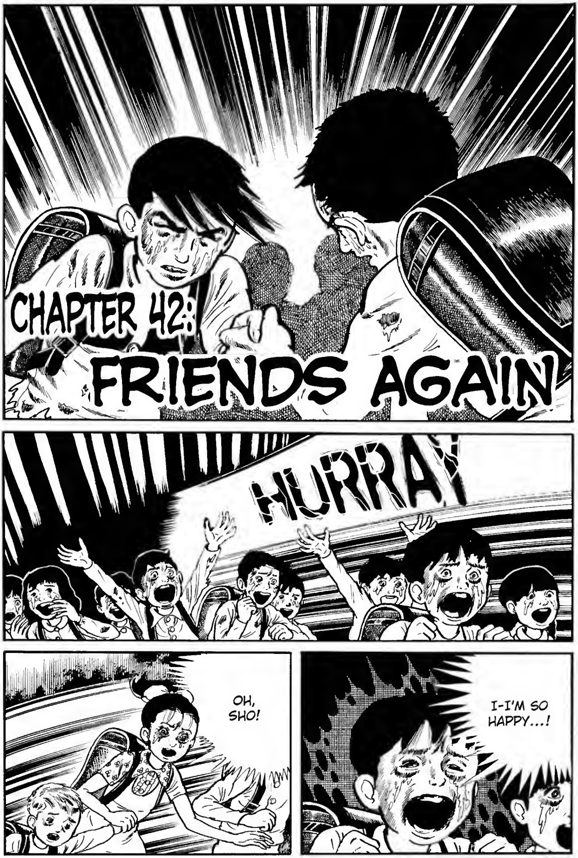

I WANTED TO BLOW UP THE FACULTY ROOM! BUT IT DIDN'T WORK!
SO I DECIDED THAT NEXT TIME I'D SET OFF AN EVEN BIGGER EXPLOSION!
LOOK! HERE'S THE PROOF!
AH!

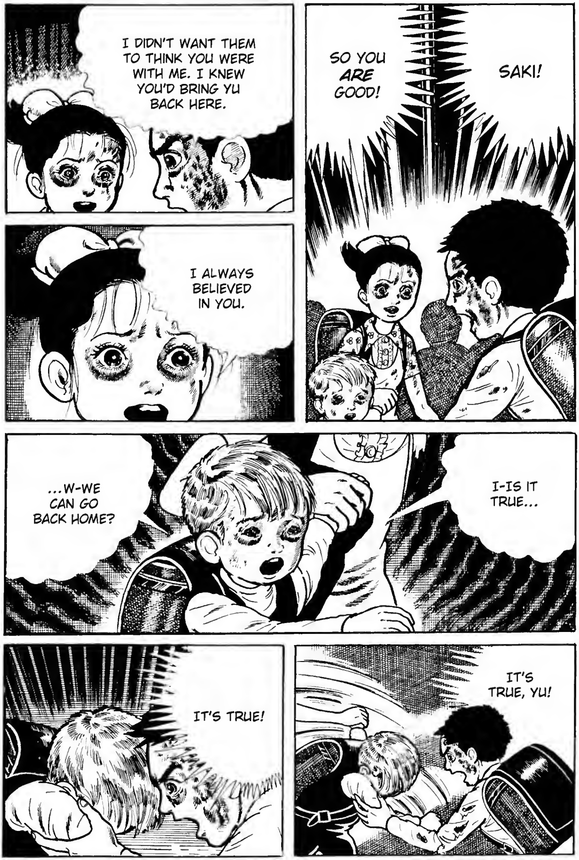

DYNAMITE!
GASP...!
INSTEAD OF BLOWING UP THE SCHOOL...
...I ENDED UP DOING SOMETHING MUCH WORSE!
IF TAKAMATSU IS RIGHT...
...THE EXPLOSION CREATED A TEAR IN TIME, OR AN EARTHQUAKE, AND TRANSPORTED US TO THE FUTURE!
OTOMO!
CAN YOU SET OFF THIS DYNAMITE AGAIN...?

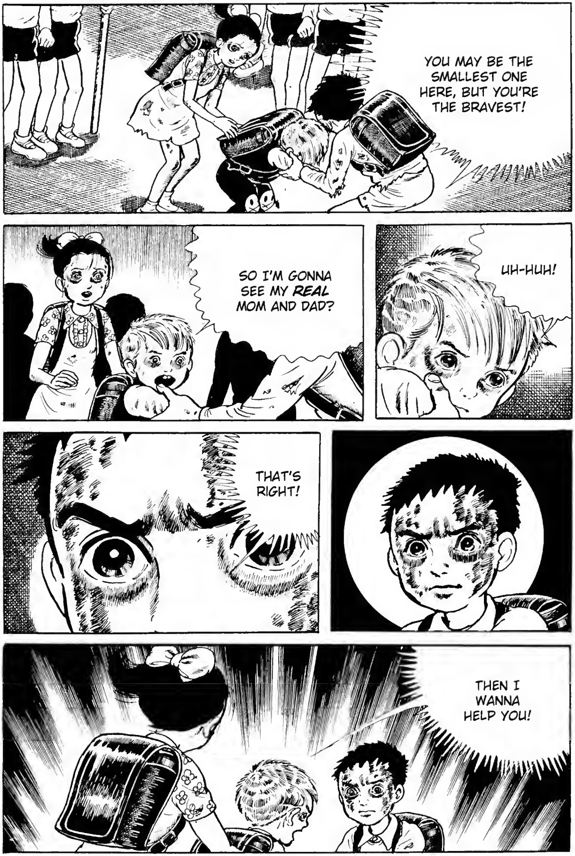

OUR FATE DEPENDS ON THIS STICK OF DYNAMITE!
Y-YES! I CAN DO IT!
TAKAMATSU!
THIS IS OUR ONLY CHANCE!
P-PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
THIS TIME WE'LL ALL WORK TOGETHER!
I'M SO SORRY I WAS SO CRUEL!

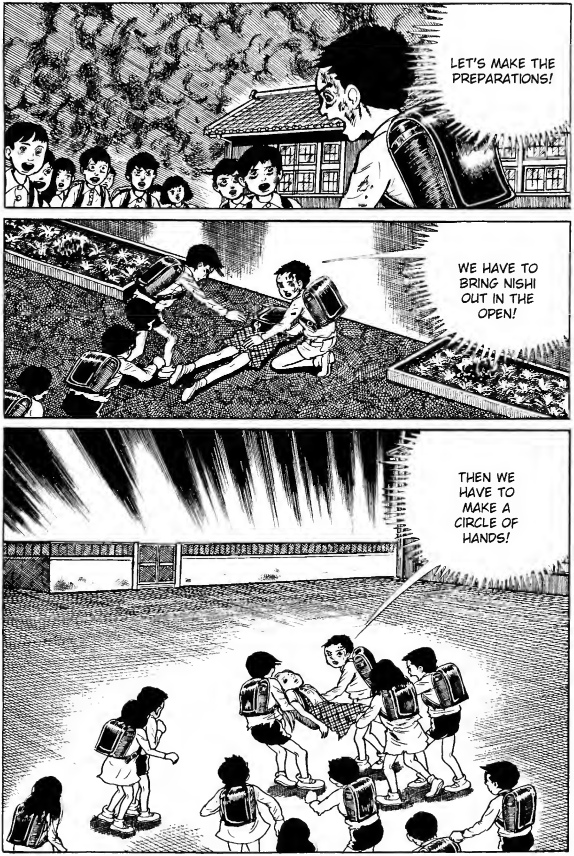

PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
OTOMO!
YAAAY

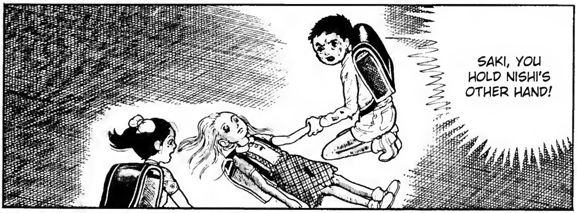
# CHAPTER 42: FRIENDS AGAIN

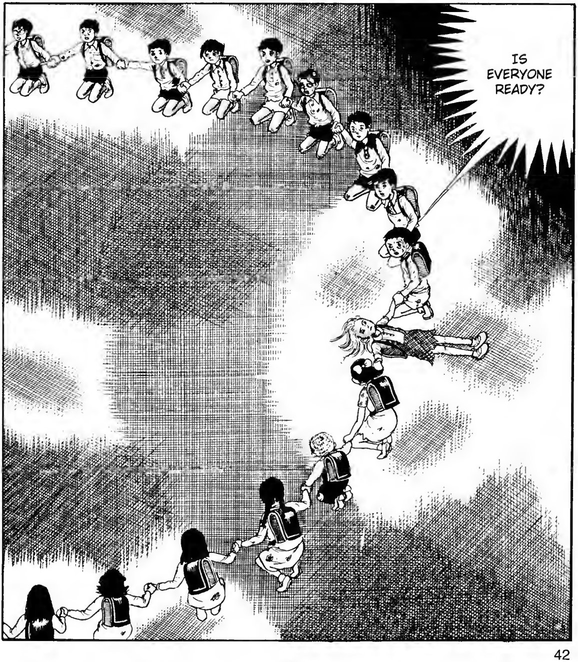

HURRAY
OH, SHO!
I-I'M SO HAPPY...!

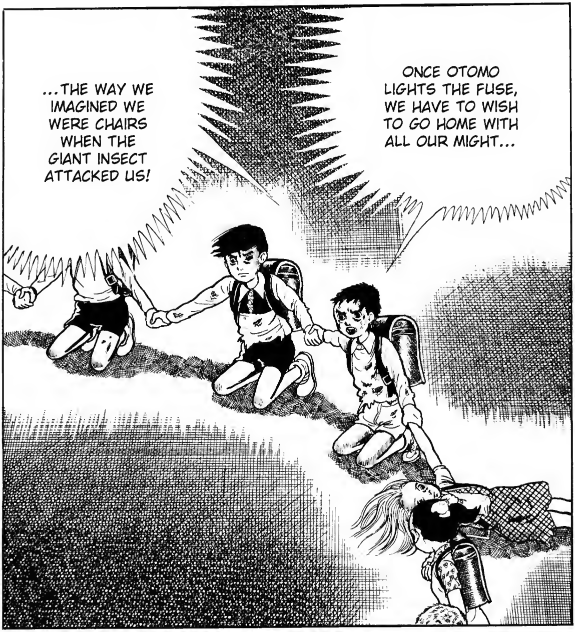

I DIDN'T WANT THEM TO THINK YOU WERE WITH ME. I KNEW YOU'D BRING YU BACK HERE.
I ALWAYS BELIEVED IN YOU.
SO YOU *ARE* GOOD!
SAKI!
I-IS IT TRUE...
...W-WE CAN GO BACK HOME?
IT'S TRUE!
IT'S TRUE, YU!

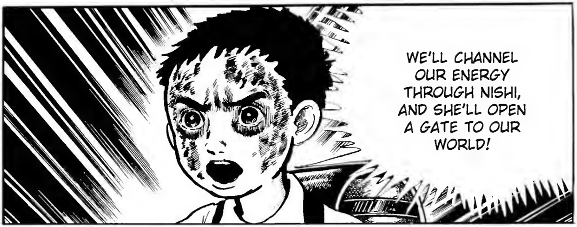

YOU MAY BE THE SMALLEST ONE HERE, BUT YOU'RE THE BRAVEST!
SO I'M GONNA SEE MY ***REAL*** MOM AND DAD?
UH-HUH!
THAT'S RIGHT!
THEN I WANNA HELP YOU!

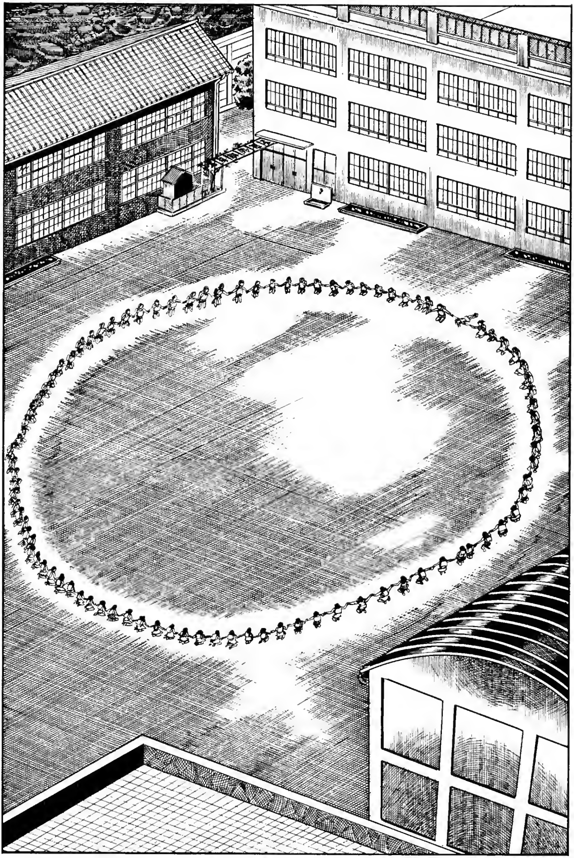

LET'S MAKE THE PREPARATIONS!
WE HAVE TO BRING NISHI OUT IN THE OPEN!
THEN WE HAVE TO MAKE A CIRCLE OF HANDS!

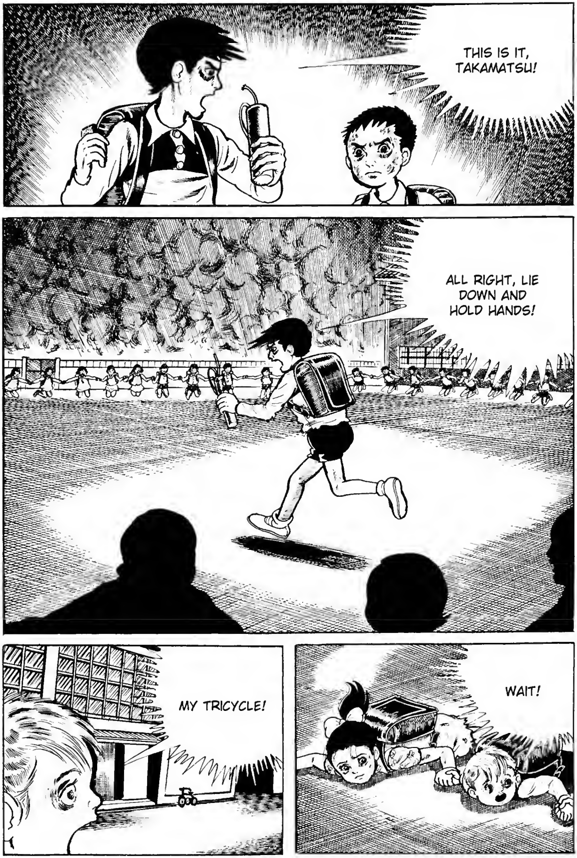

SAKI, YOU HOLD NISHI'S OTHER HAND!

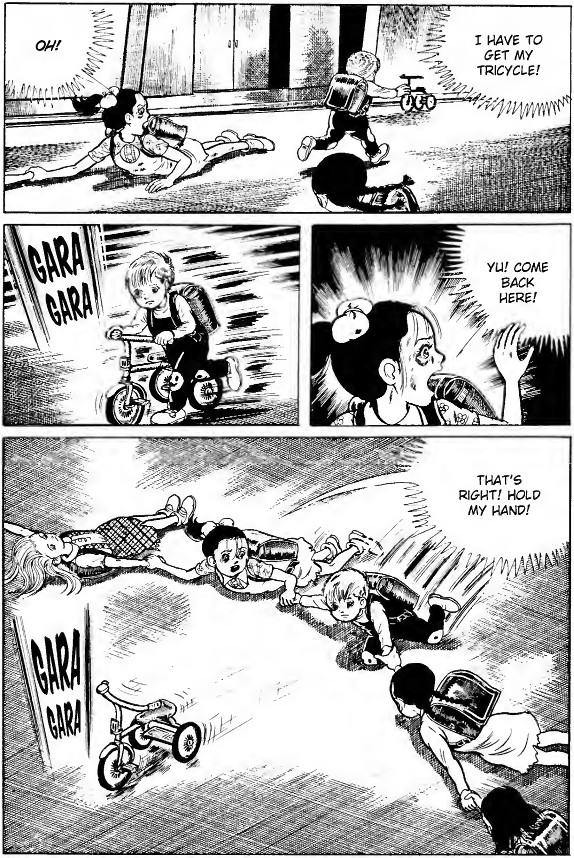

IS EVERYONE READY?

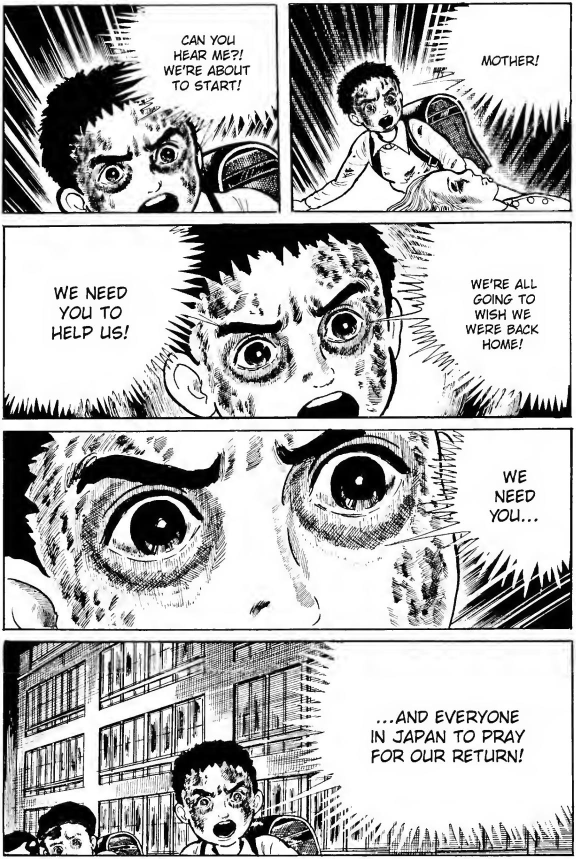

ONCE OTOMO LIGHTS THE FUSE, WE HAVE TO WISH TO GO HOME WITH ALL OUR MIGHT...
...THE WAY WE IMAGINED WE WERE CHAIRS WHEN THE GIANT INSECT ATTACKED US!

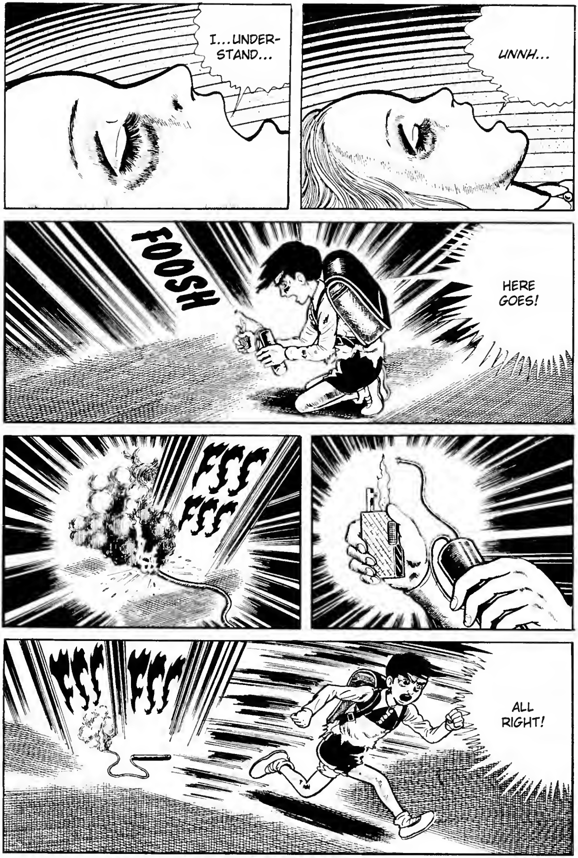

WE'LL CHANNEL OUR ENERGY THROUGH NISHI, AND SHE'LL OPEN A GATE TO OUR WORLD!

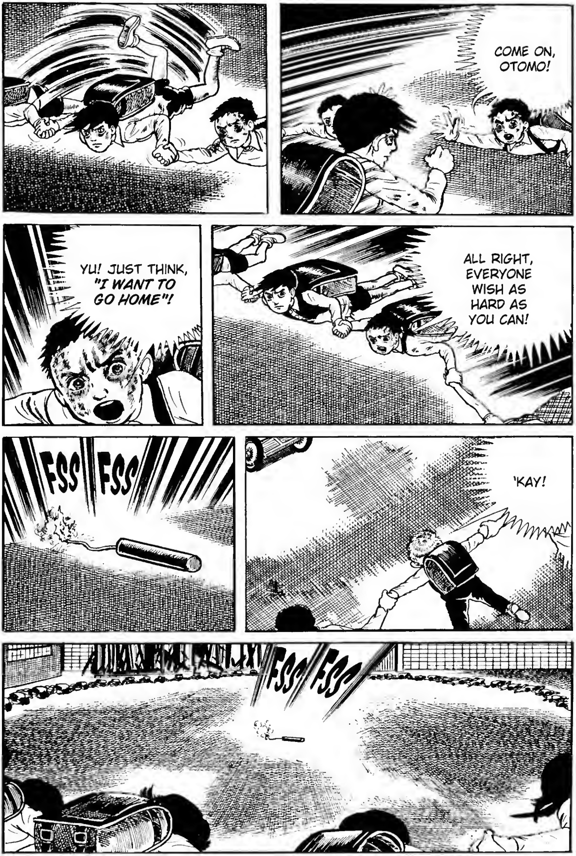


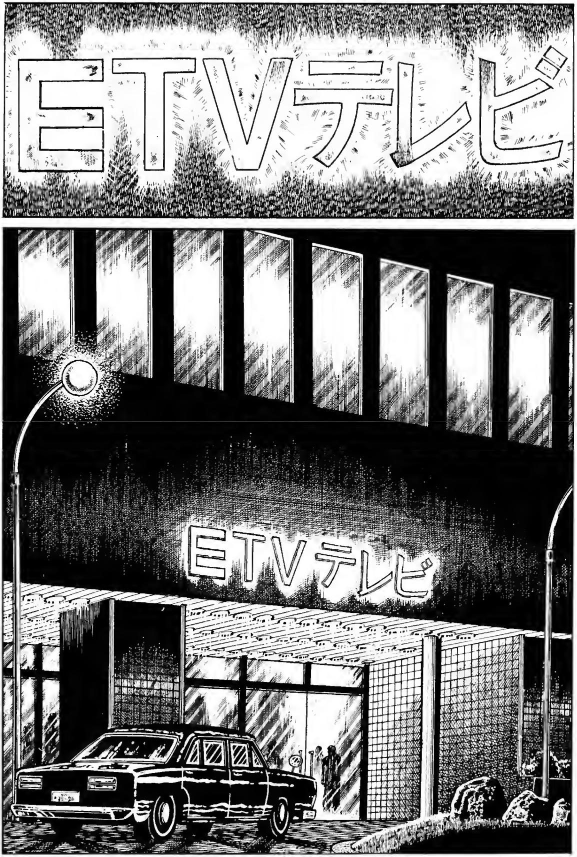

THIS IS IT, TAKAMATSU!
ALL RIGHT, LIE DOWN AND HOLD HANDS!
MY TRICYCLE!
WAIT!

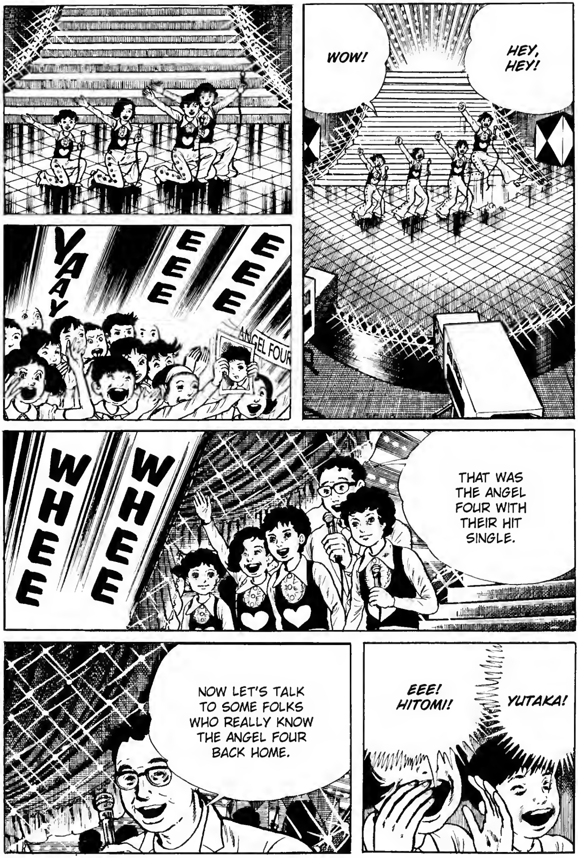

OH!
I HAVE TO GET MY TRICYCLE!
GARA GARA
YU! COME BACK HERE!
THAT'S RIGHT! HOLD MY HAND!
GARA GARA

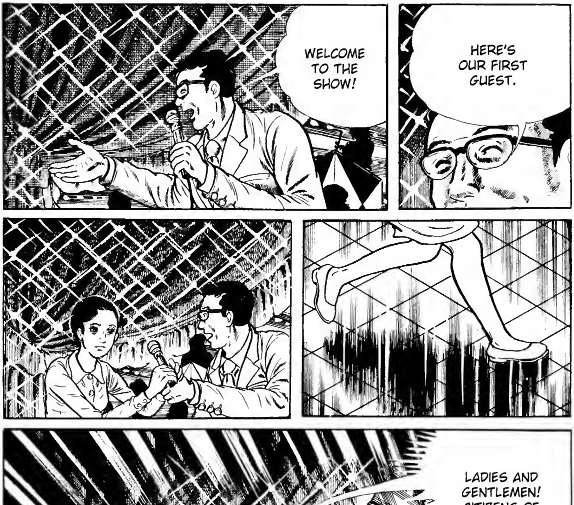

CAN YOU HEAR ME?! WE'RE ABOUT TO START!
MOTHER!
WE NEED YOU TO HELP US!
WE'RE ALL GOING TO WISH WE WERE BACK HOME!
WE NEED YOU...
...AND EVERYONE IN JAPAN TO PRAY FOR OUR RETURN!

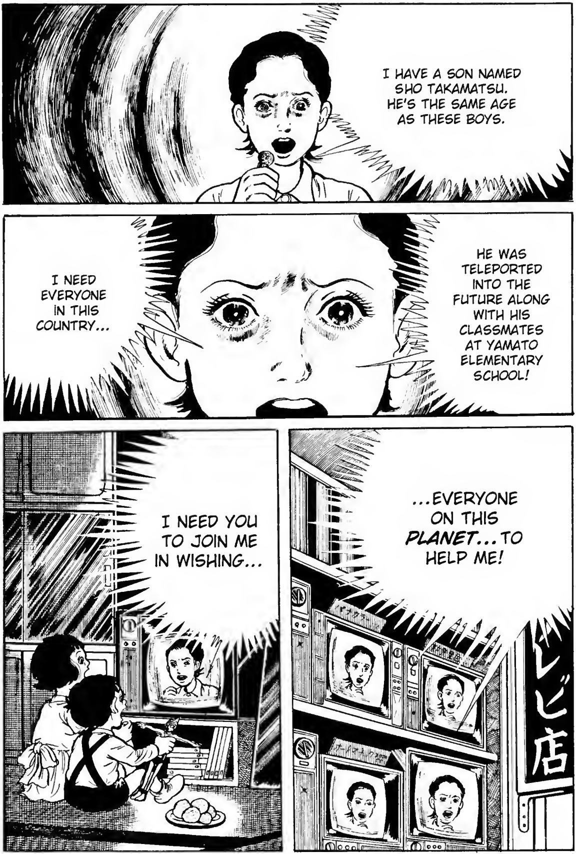

I...UNDER-STAND...
UNNH...
FOOSH
HERE GOES!
FSS FSS
FSS FSS
ALL RIGHT!


COME ON, OTOMO!
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE WISH AS HARD AS YOU CAN!
YU! JUST THINK, *"I WANT TO GO HOME"!*
'KAY!
FSS FSS
FSS FSS

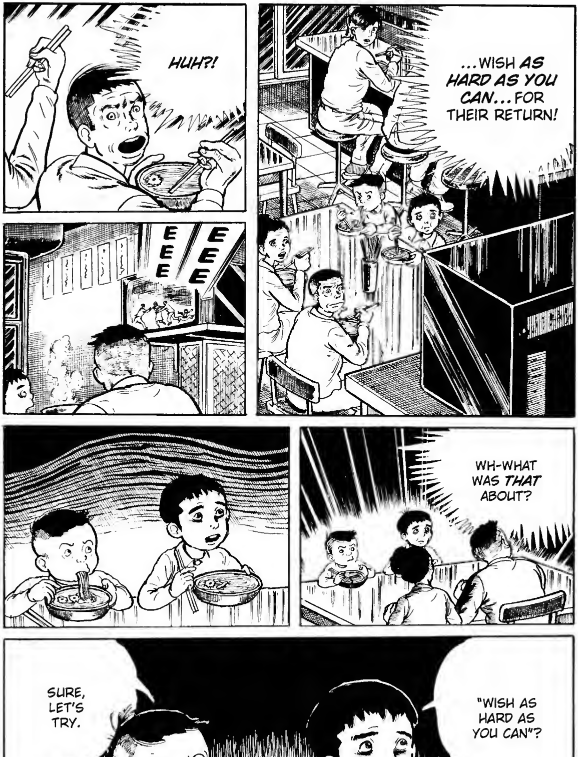

ETVテレビ
ETVテレビ

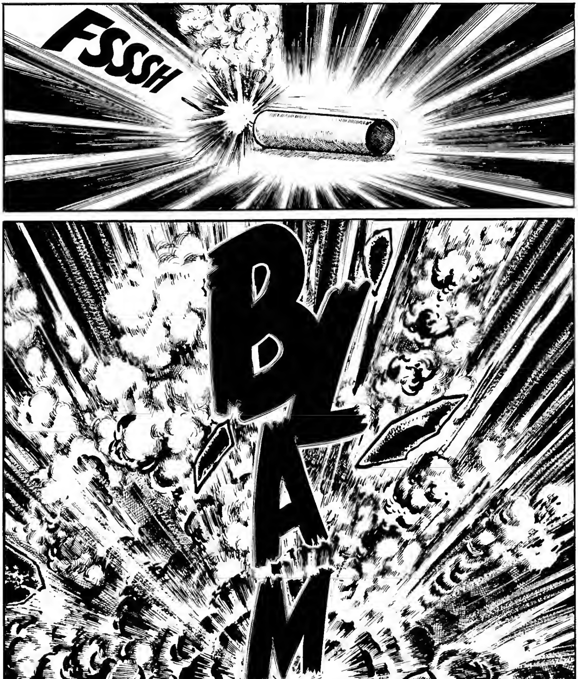

WOW!
HEY, HEY!
YAAY
EEE
EEE
ANGEL FOUR
WHEE
WHEE
THAT WAS THE ANGEL FOUR WITH THEIR HIT SINGLE.
NOW LET'S TALK TO SOME FOLKS WHO REALLY KNOW THE ANGEL FOUR BACK HOME.
EEE! HITOMI!
YUTAKA!

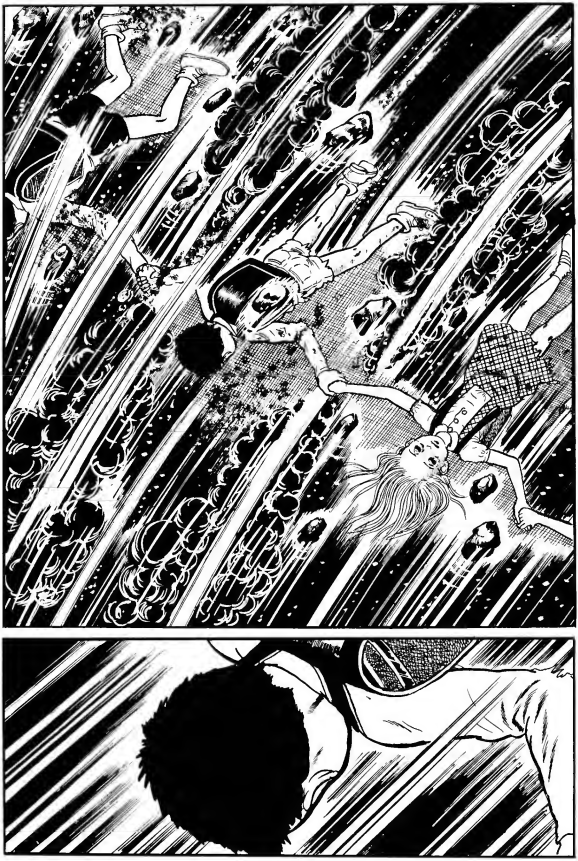

WELCOME TO THE SHOW!
HERE'S OUR FIRST GUEST.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! CITIZENS OF JAPAN!

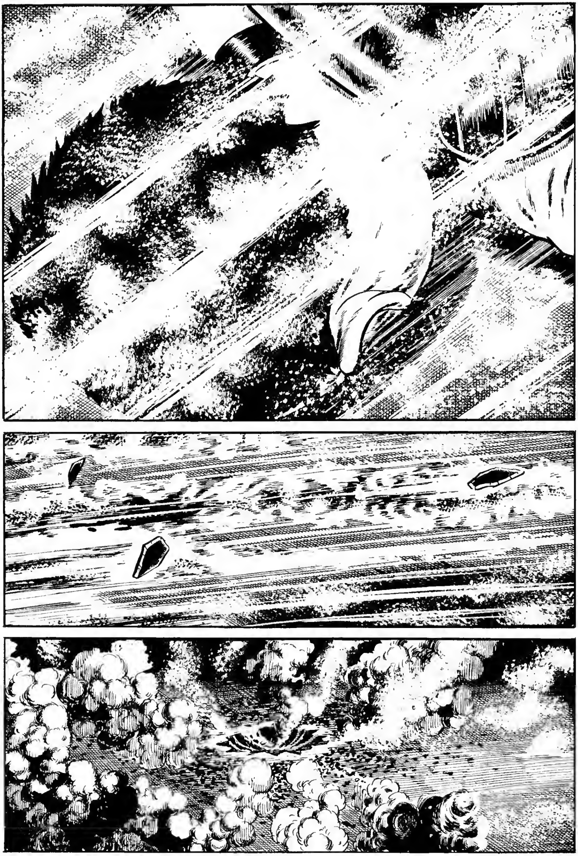

I HAVE A SON NAMED SHO TAKAMATSU. HE'S THE SAME AGE AS THESE BOYS.
HE WAS TELEPORTED INTO THE FUTURE ALONG WITH HIS CLASSMATES AT YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
I NEED EVERYONE IN THIS COUNTRY...
I NEED YOU TO JOIN ME IN WISHING...
...EVERYONE ON THIS *PLANET*... TO HELP ME!
レビ店

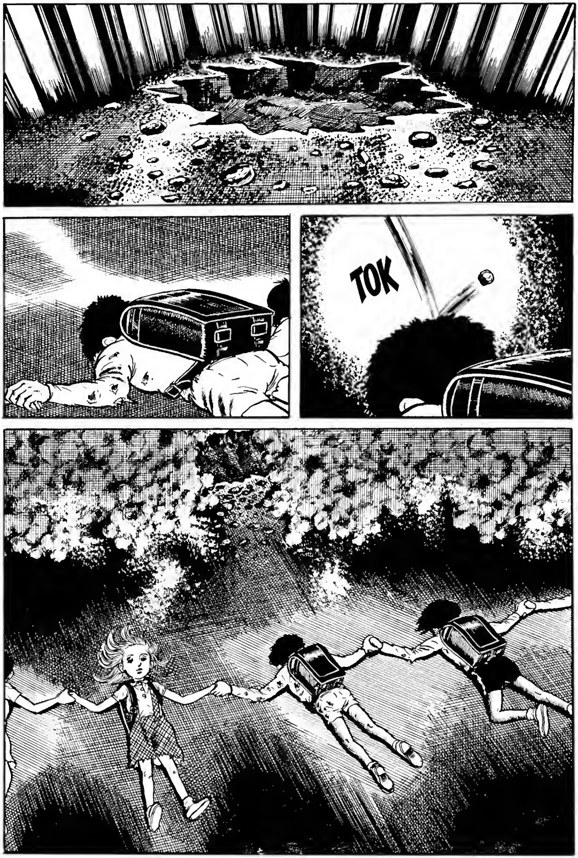
*SIGN=TV STORE

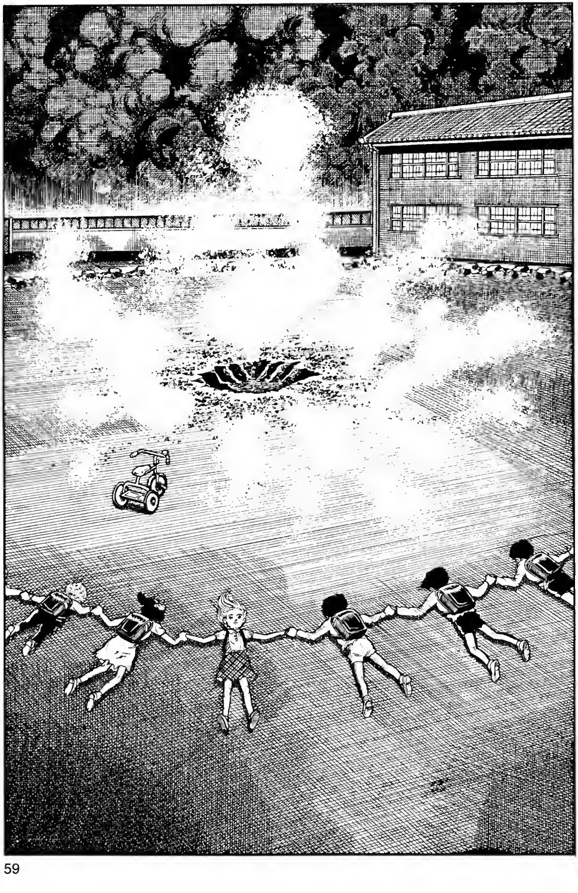

...WISH *AS HARD AS YOU CAN*... FOR THEIR RETURN!
*HUH?!*
EEE EEE
WH-WHAT WAS *THAT* ABOUT?
"WISH AS HARD AS YOU CAN"?
SURE, LET'S TRY.

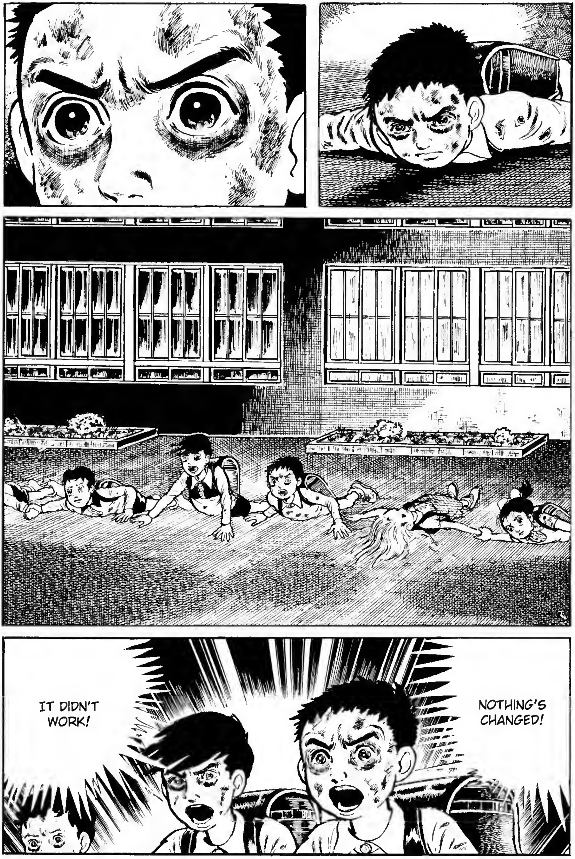

FSSSH
BLAMM

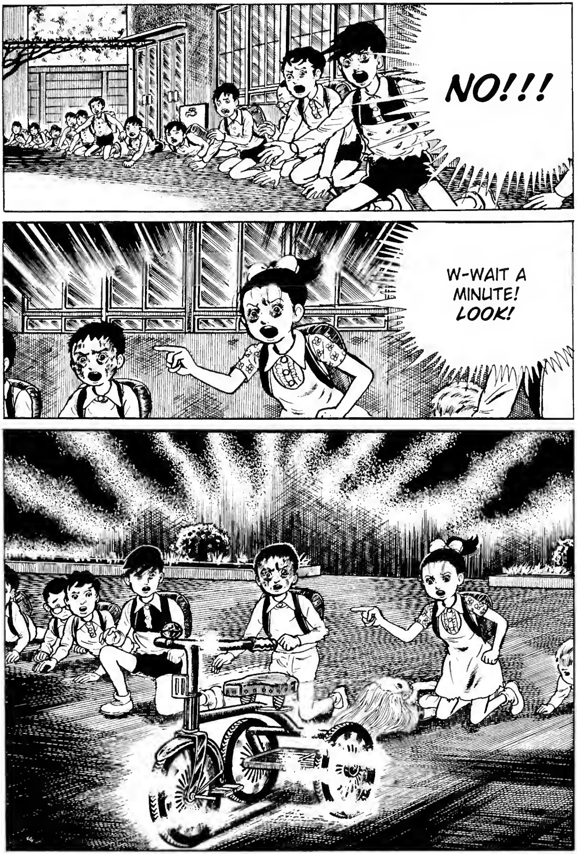


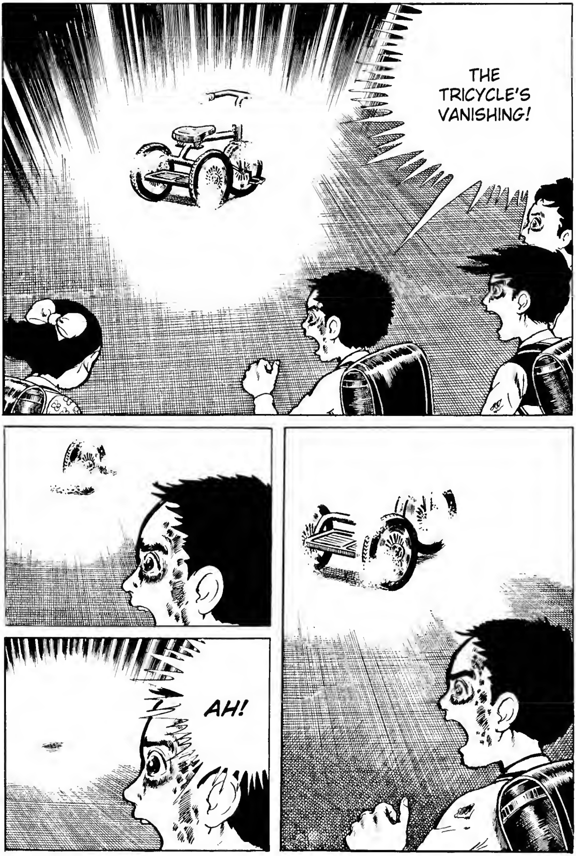


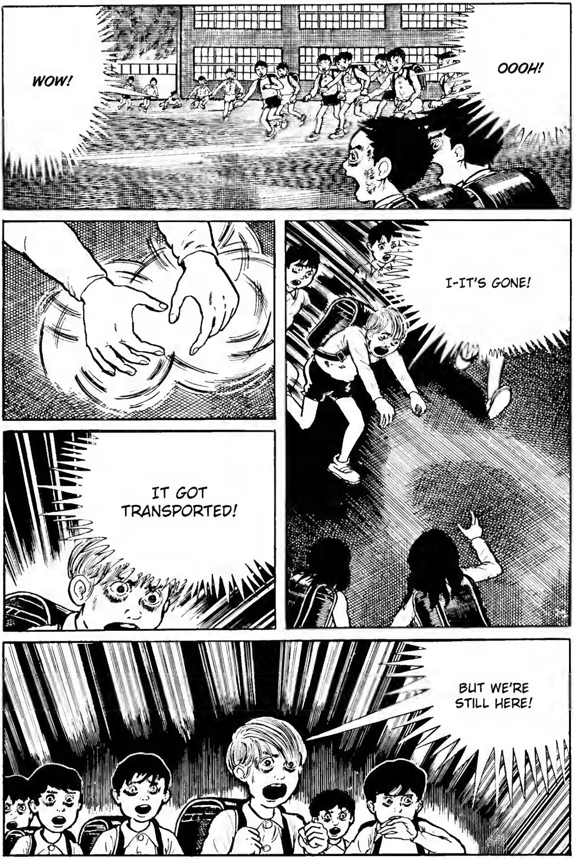

TOK

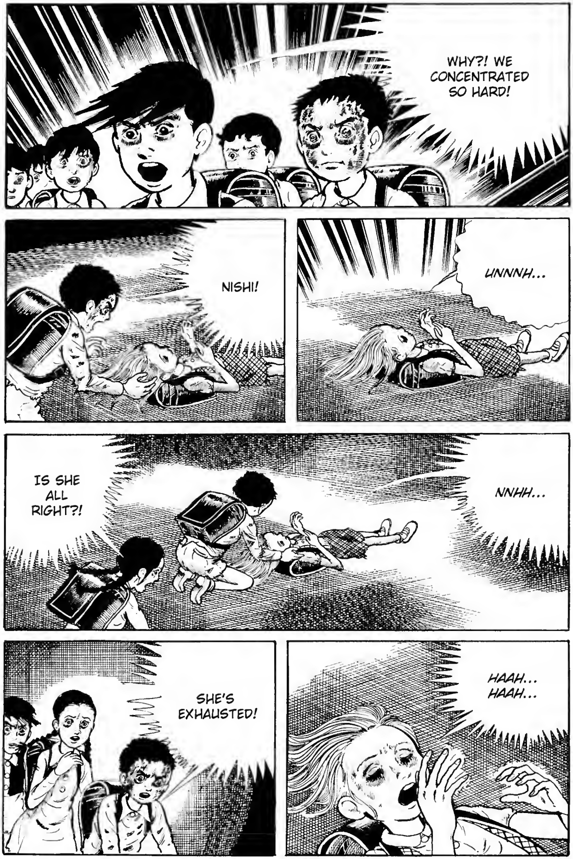


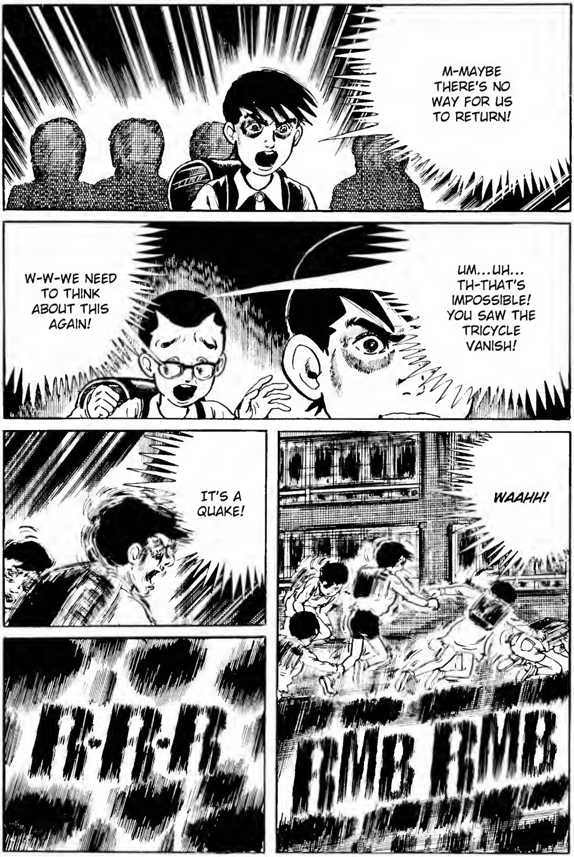

IT DIDN'T WORK!
NOTHING'S CHANGED!

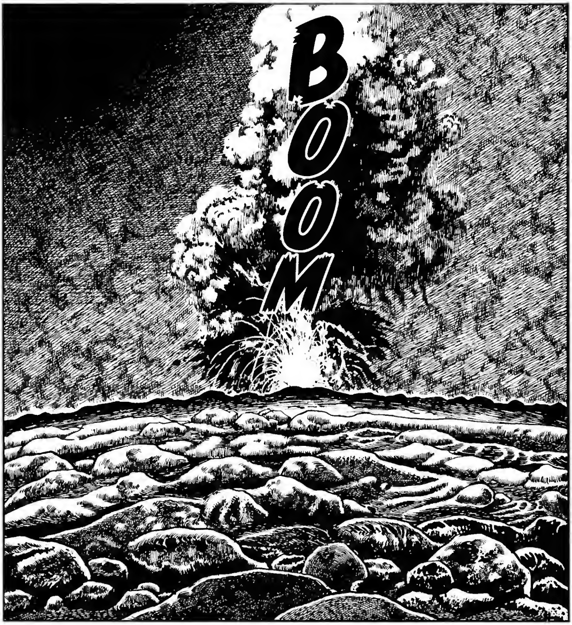

NO!!!
W-WAIT A MINUTE! LOOK!

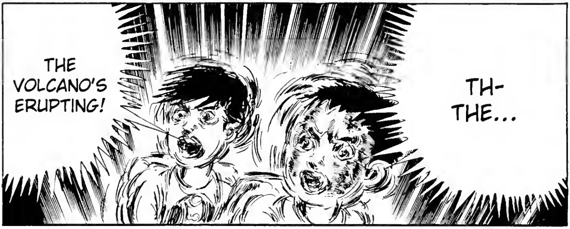

THE TRICYCLE'S VANISHING!
AH!

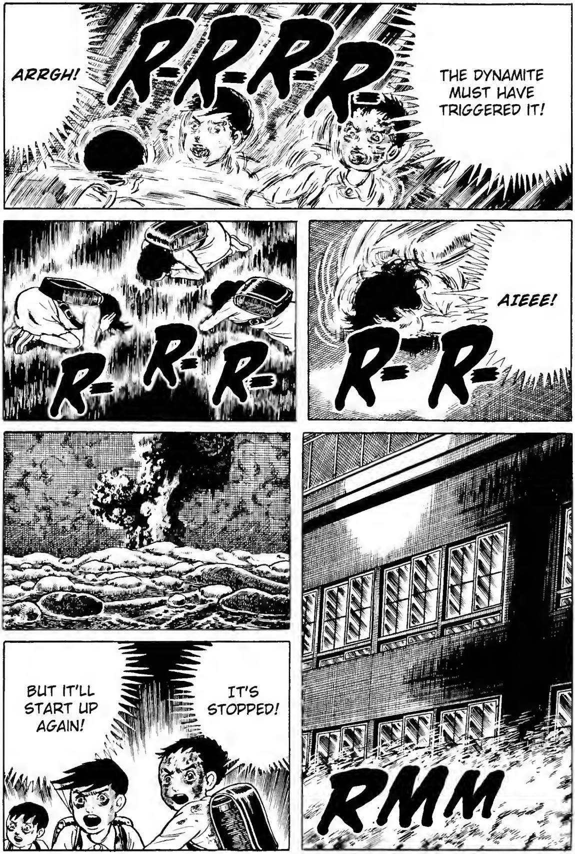

OOOH!
WOW!
I-IT'S GONE!
IT GOT TRANSPORTED!
BUT WE'RE STILL HERE!

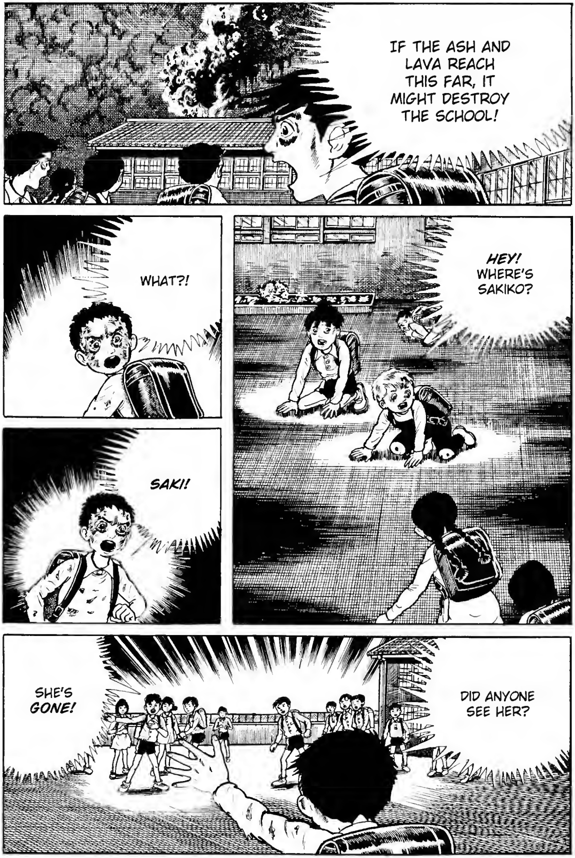

WHY?! WE CONCENTRATED SO HARD!
NISHI!
UNNNH...
IS SHE ALL RIGHT?!
NNHH...
SHE'S EXHAUSTED!
HAAH... HAAH...

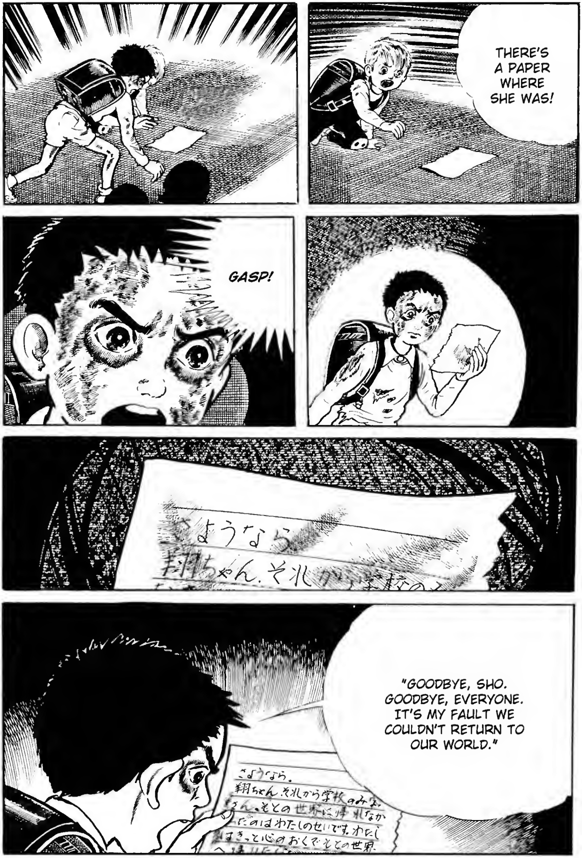

M-MAYBE THERE'S NO WAY FOR US TO RETURN!
W-W-WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT THIS AGAIN!
UM...UH... TH-THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU SAW THE TRICYCLE VANISH!
IT'S A QUAKE!
WAAHH!
R-R-R
RMB RMB

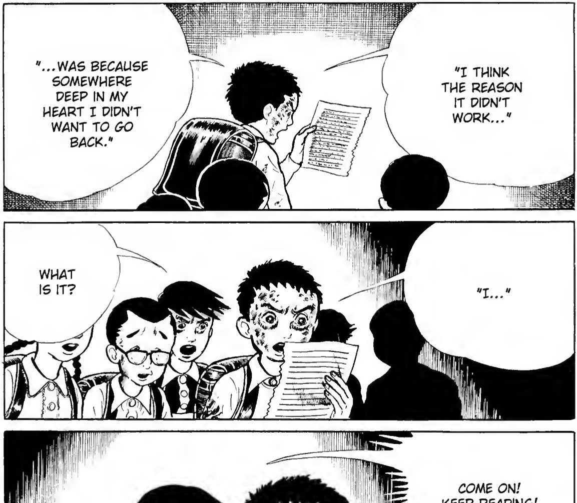

BOOM

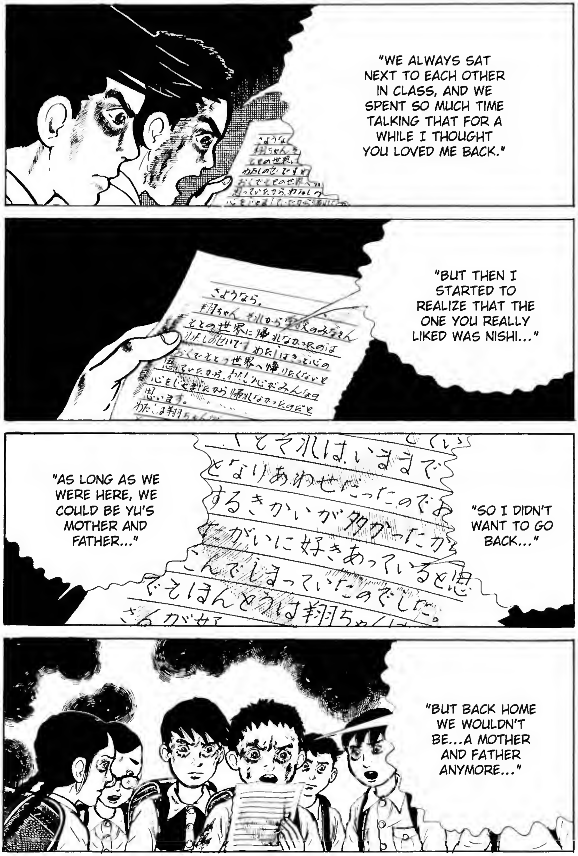

TH-
THE...
THE VOLCANO'S ERUPTING!

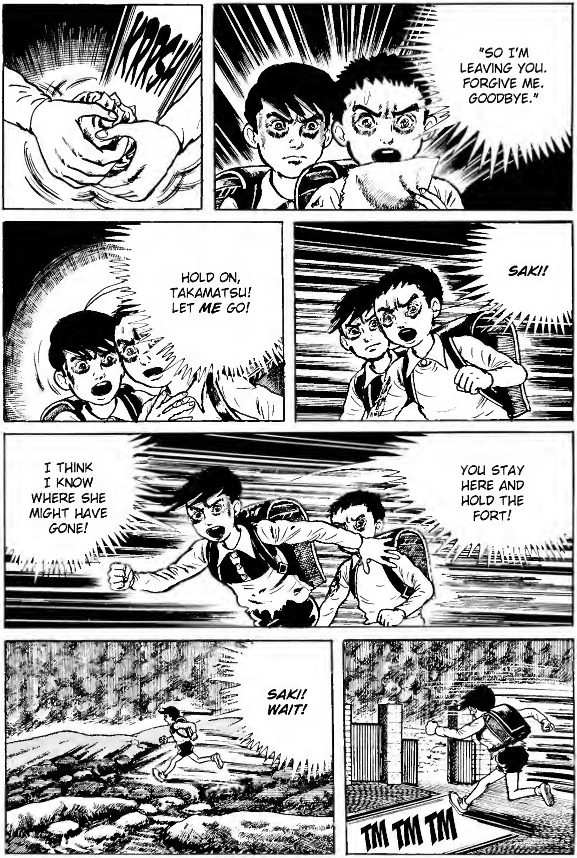

THE DYNAMITE MUST HAVE TRIGGERED IT!
R-R-R-R
ARRGH!
AIEEE!
R-R
R-R-R
RMM
IT'S STOPPED!
BUT IT'LL START UP AGAIN!

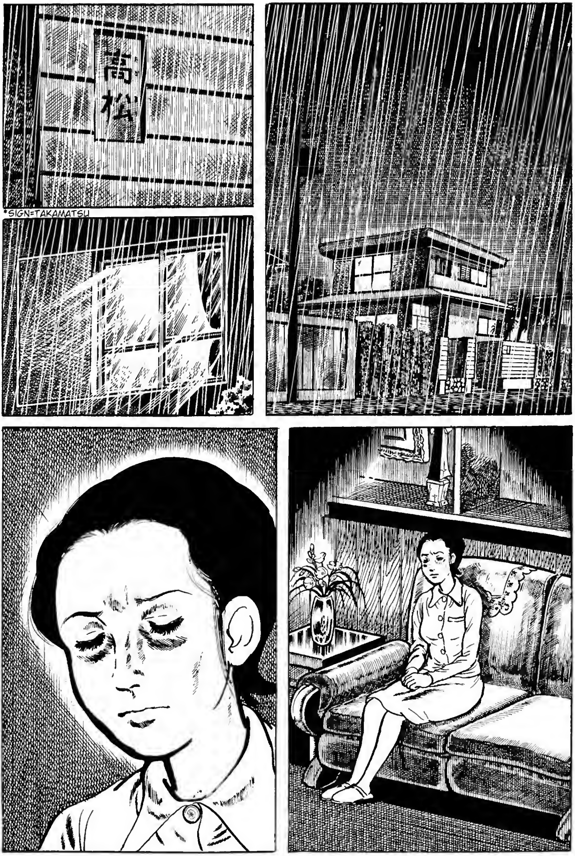

IF THE ASH AND LAVA REACH THIS FAR, IT MIGHT DESTROY THE SCHOOL!
*HEY!* WHERE'S SAKIKO?
WHAT?!
*SAKI!*
DID ANYONE SEE HER?
SHE'S *GONE!*


THERE'S A PAPER WHERE SHE WAS!
GASP!
さようなら
翔ちゃん.それから学校の
"GOODBYE, SHO. GOODBYE, EVERYONE. IT'S MY FAULT WE COULDN'T RETURN TO OUR WORLD."
さようなら。
翔ちゃん.それから学校のみな
さん、そとの世界に帰れなか
ったのはわたしのせいです。わたし
はきっと心のおくでそとの世界

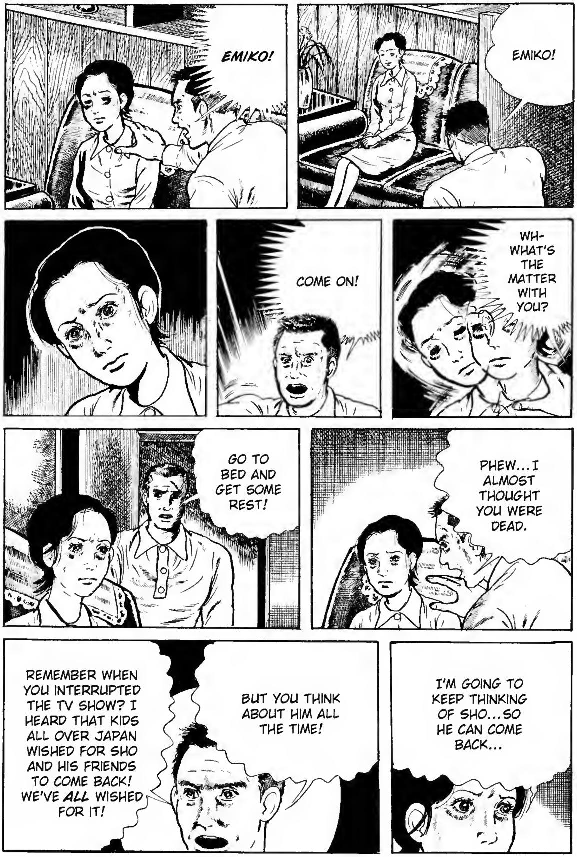

"I THINK THE REASON IT DIDN'T WORK..."
"...WAS BECAUSE SOMEWHERE DEEP IN MY HEART I DIDN'T WANT TO GO BACK."
"I..."
WHAT IS IT?
COME ON! KEEP READING!
"I LOVE YOU, SHO."
"I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU."
さようなら
翔ちゃん、それから
もとの世界に帰れな
わたしのせいです.わたし
おくでもとの

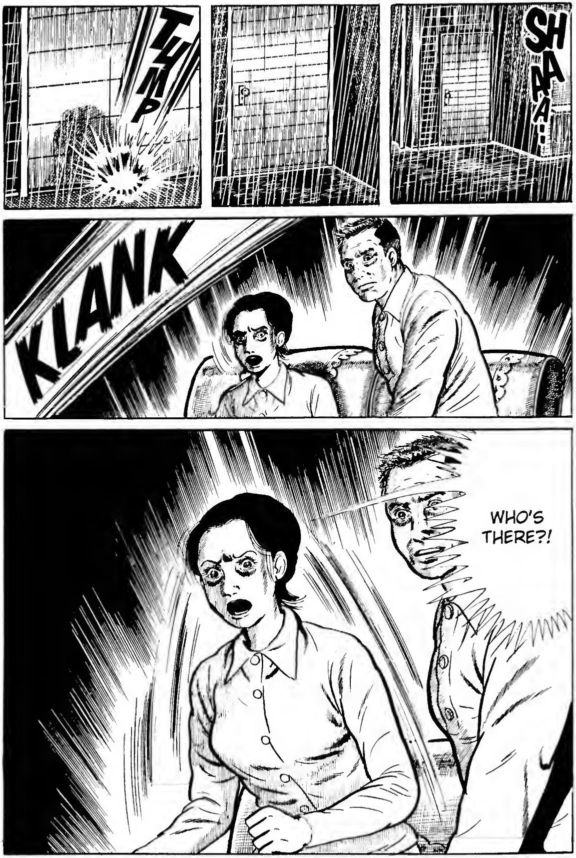

"WE ALWAYS SAT NEXT TO EACH OTHER IN CLASS, AND WE SPENT SO MUCH TIME TALKING THAT FOR A WHILE I THOUGHT YOU LOVED ME BACK."
さようなら。
翔ちゃん それから学校のみなさん
そとの世界に帰れなかったのは
わたしのせいです わたしはきっと心の
おくでそとの世界へ帰りたくないと
思っていたから、わたしの心がみんなの
心をしてましたから帰れなかったのだと
思います。
わたしは翔ちゃんが
"BUT THEN I STARTED TO REALIZE THAT THE ONE YOU REALLY LIKED WAS NISHI..."
とそれはいままで
となりあわせだったのでお
するきかいが多かったから
たがいに好きあっていると思
こんでしまっていたのでした。
でもほんとうは翔ちゃんは
"AS LONG AS WE WERE HERE, WE COULD BE YU'S MOTHER AND FATHER..."
"SO I DIDN'T WANT TO GO BACK..."
"BUT BACK HOME WE WOULDN'T BE...A MOTHER AND FATHER ANYMORE..."

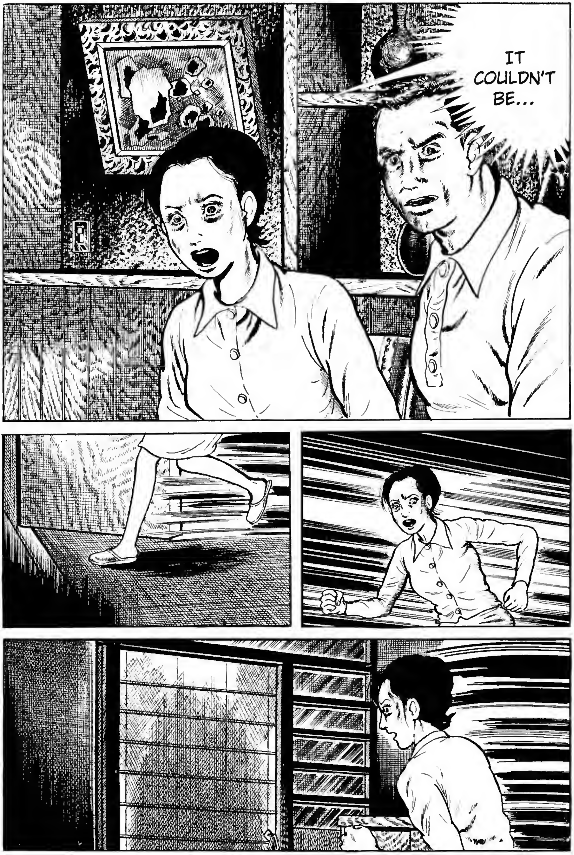

KRRSH
"SO I'M LEAVING YOU. FORGIVE ME. GOODBYE."
HOLD ON, TAKAMATSU! LET *ME* GO!
*SAKI!*
I THINK I KNOW WHERE SHE MIGHT HAVE GONE!
YOU STAY HERE AND HOLD THE FORT!
*SAKI! WAIT!*
TM TM TM

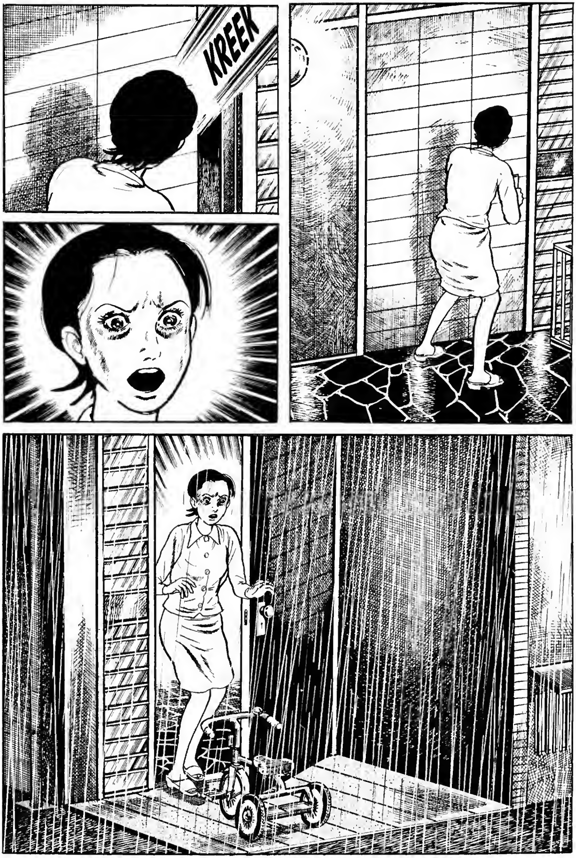


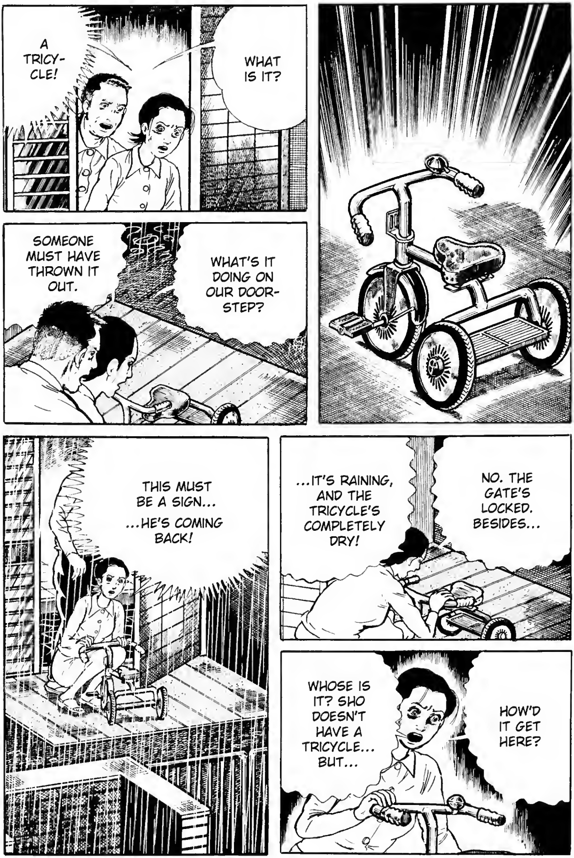
*SIGN=TAKAMATSU

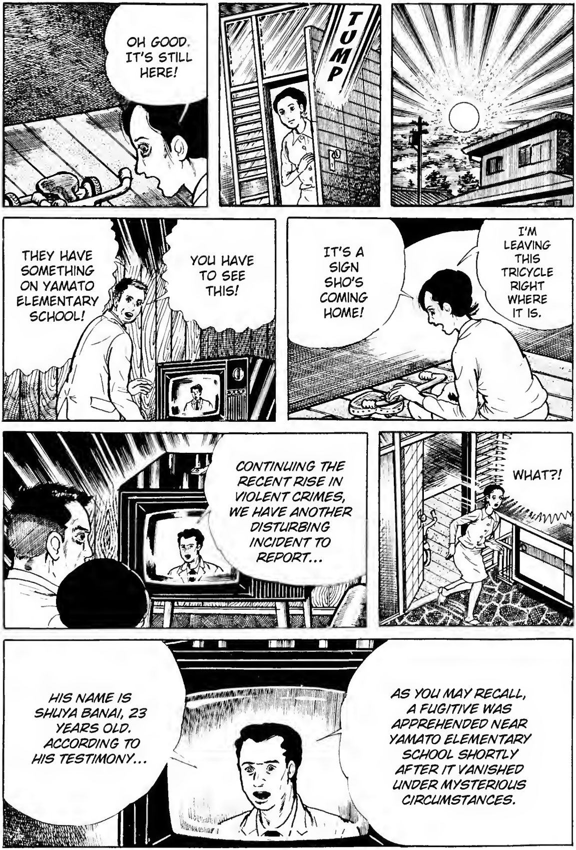

*EMIKO!*
EMIKO!
COME ON!
WH-WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
GO TO BED AND GET SOME REST!
PHEW...I ALMOST THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
REMEMBER WHEN YOU INTERRUPTED THE TV SHOW? I HEARD THAT KIDS ALL OVER JAPAN WISHED FOR SHO AND HIS FRIENDS TO COME BACK! WE'VE *ALL* WISHED FOR IT!
BUT YOU THINK ABOUT HIM ALL THE TIME!
I'M GOING TO KEEP THINKING OF SHO...SO HE CAN COME BACK...

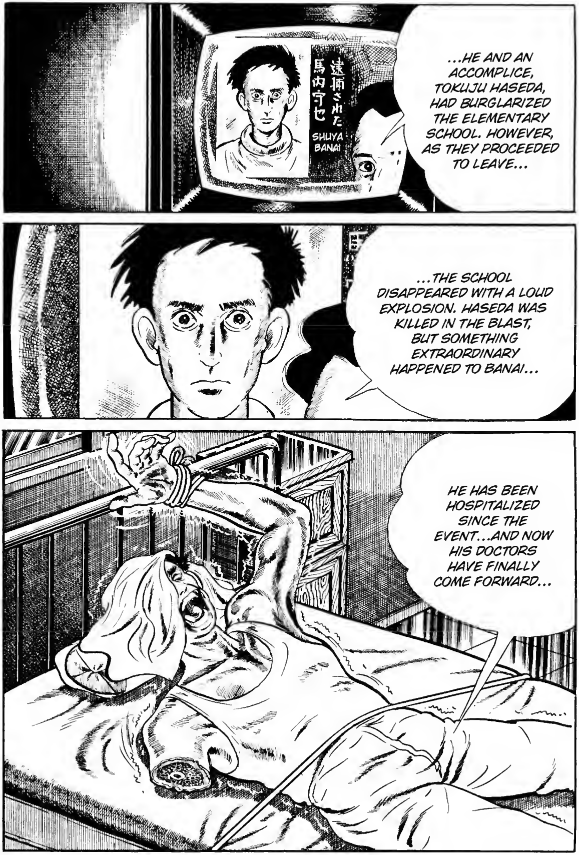

TUMP
SHAAA...
KLANK
WHO'S THERE?!

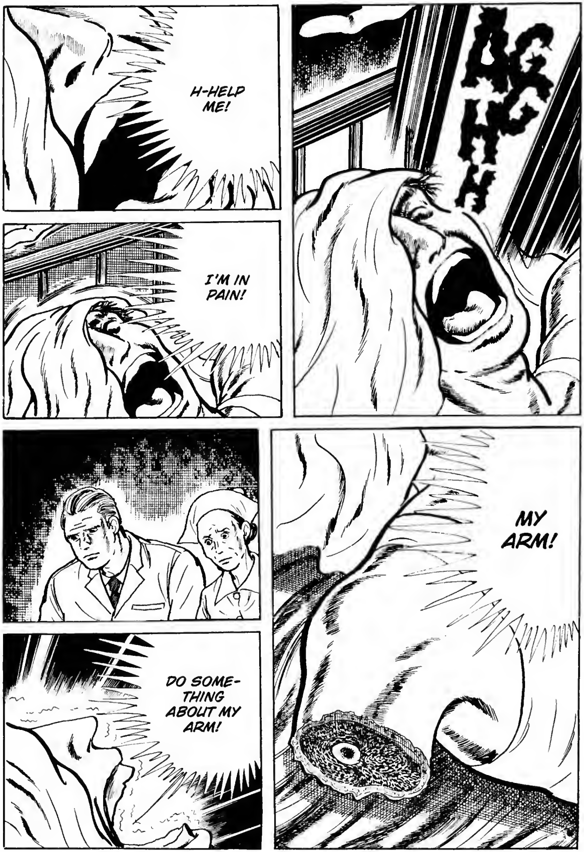

IT COULDN'T BE...

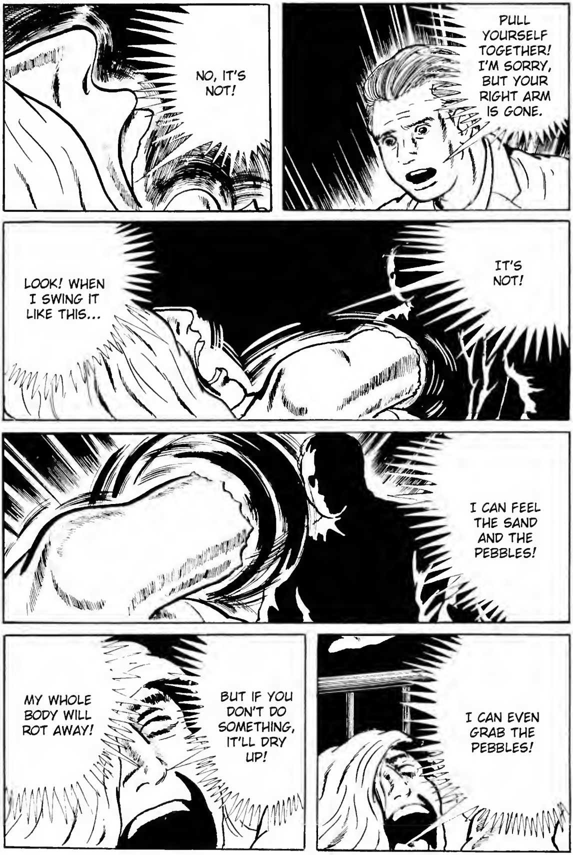

KREEK

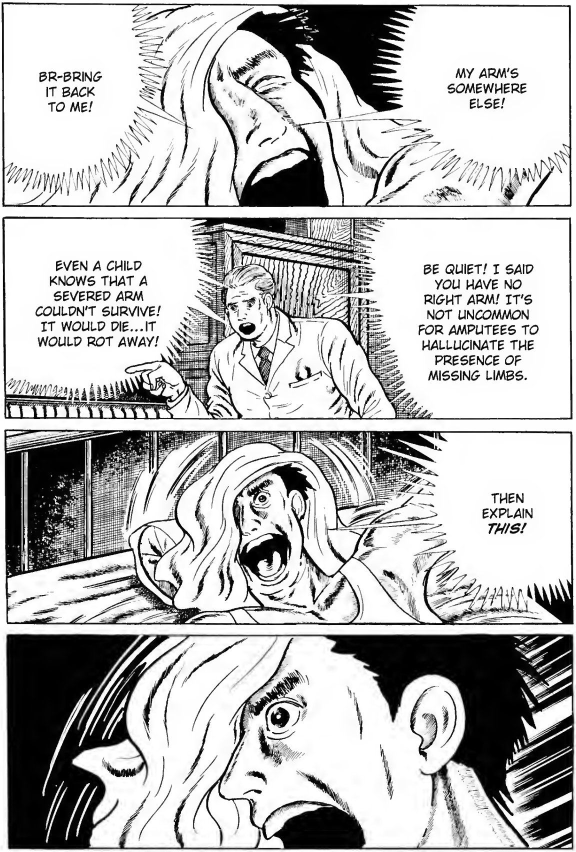

WHAT IS IT?
A TRICYCLE!
WHAT'S IT DOING ON OUR DOORSTEP?
SOMEONE MUST HAVE THROWN IT OUT.
NO. THE GATE'S LOCKED. BESIDES...
...IT'S RAINING, AND THE TRICYCLE'S COMPLETELY DRY!
HOW'D IT GET HERE?
WHOSE IS IT? SHO DOESN'T HAVE A TRICYCLE... BUT...
THIS MUST BE A SIGN...
...HE'S COMING BACK!

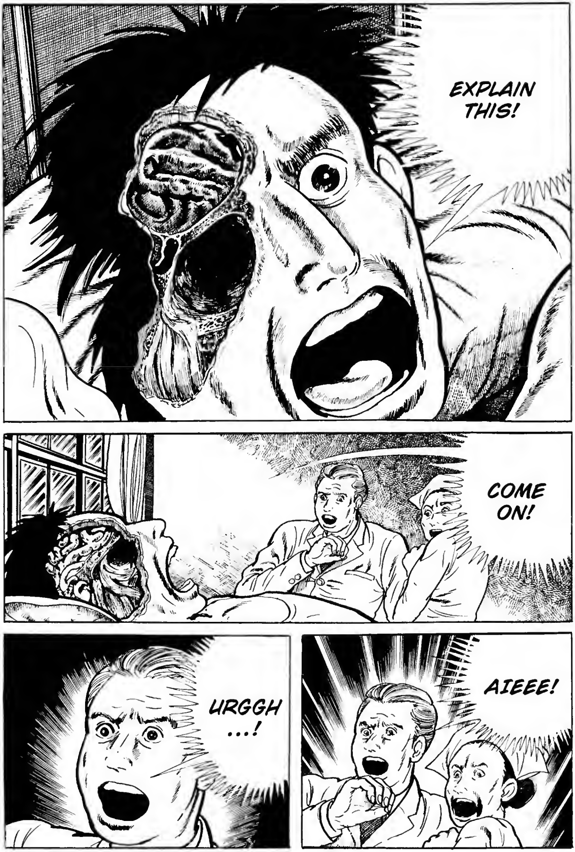

TUMP
OH GOOD. IT'S STILL HERE!
I'M LEAVING THIS TRICYCLE RIGHT WHERE IT IS.
IT'S A SIGN SHO'S COMING HOME!
YOU HAVE TO SEE THIS!
THEY HAVE SOMETHING ON YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
WHAT?!
*CONTINUING THE RECENT RISE IN VIOLENT CRIMES, WE HAVE ANOTHER DISTURBING INCIDENT TO REPORT...*
*AS YOU MAY RECALL, A FUGITIVE WAS APPREHENDED NEAR YAMATO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHORTLY AFTER IT VANISHED UNDER MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES.*
*HIS NAME IS SHUYA BANAI, 23 YEARS OLD. ACCORDING TO HIS TESTIMONY...*

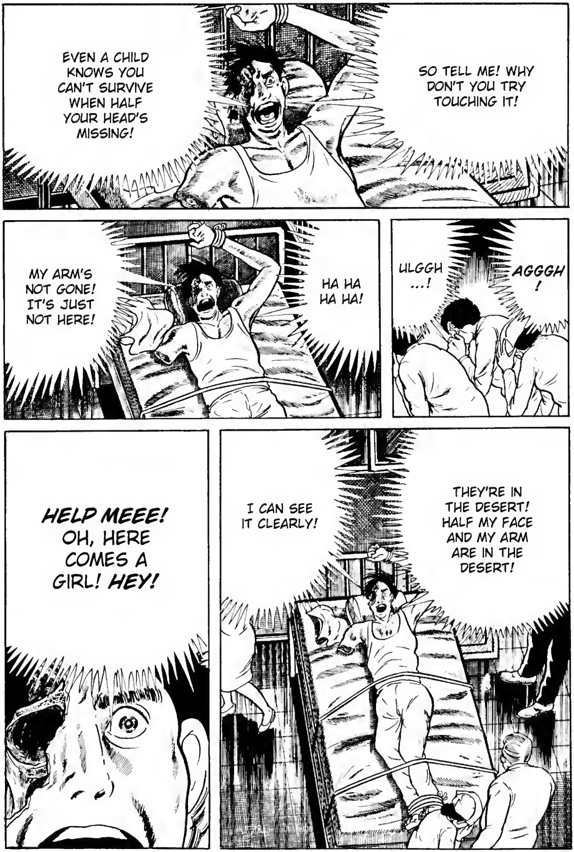

逮捕された
馬内守也
SHUYA BANAI
...HE AND AN ACCOMPLICE, TOKUJU HASEDA, HAD BURGLARIZED THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. HOWEVER, AS THEY PROCEEDED TO LEAVE...
...THE SCHOOL DISAPPEARED WITH A LOUD EXPLOSION. HASEDA WAS KILLED IN THE BLAST, BUT SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY HAPPENED TO BANAI...
HE HAS BEEN HOSPITALIZED SINCE THE EVENT...AND NOW HIS DOCTORS HAVE FINALLY COME FORWARD...

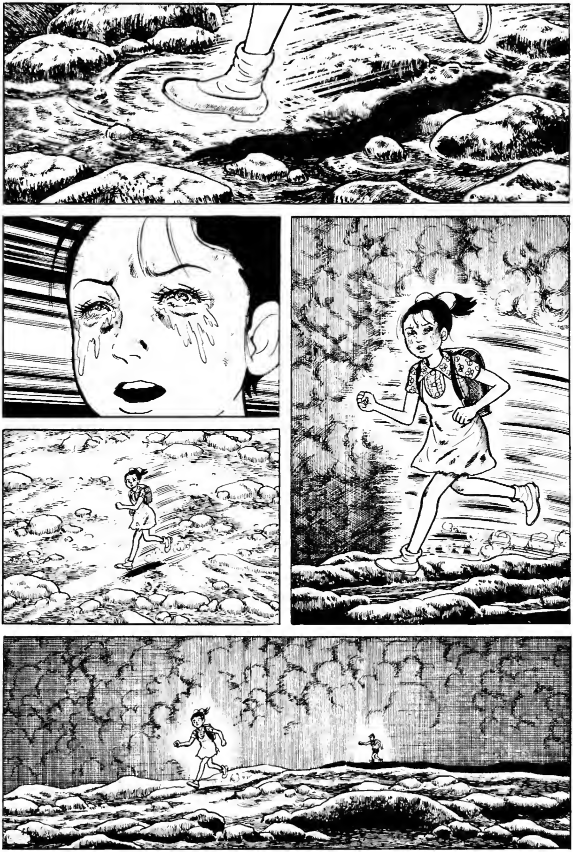

H-HELP ME!
I'M IN PAIN!
AGHHH
DO SOME-THING ABOUT MY ARM!
MY ARM!

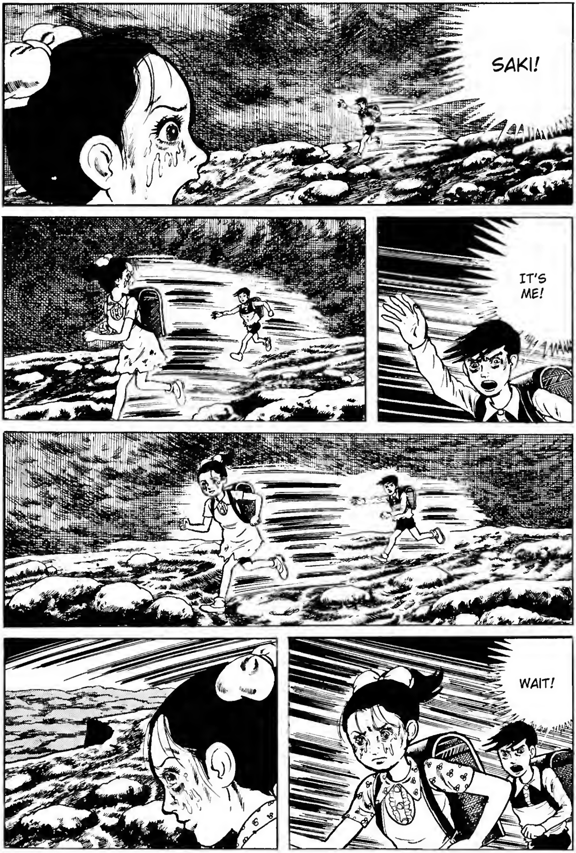

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER! I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR RIGHT ARM IS GONE.
NO, IT'S NOT!
IT'S NOT!
LOOK! WHEN I SWING IT LIKE THIS...
I CAN FEEL THE SAND AND THE PEBBLES!
I CAN EVEN GRAB THE PEBBLES!
BUT IF YOU DON'T DO SOMETHING, IT'LL DRY UP!
MY WHOLE BODY WILL ROT AWAY!

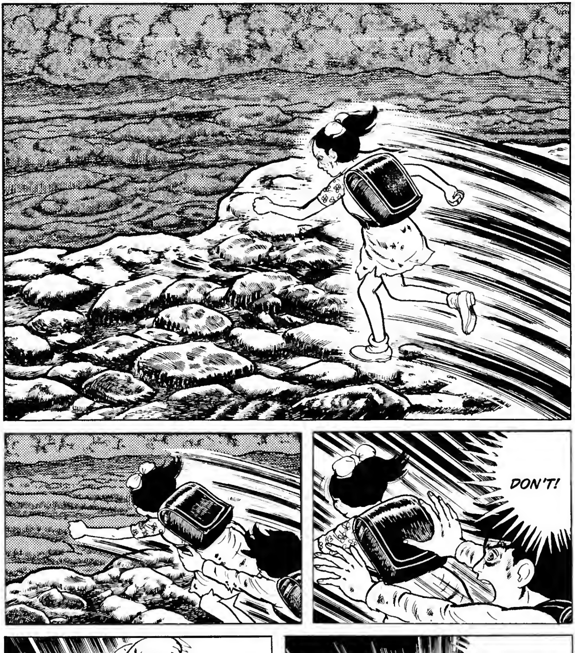

MY ARM'S SOMEWHERE ELSE!
BR-BRING IT BACK TO ME!
BE QUIET! I SAID YOU HAVE NO RIGHT ARM! IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR AMPUTEES TO HALLUCINATE THE PRESENCE OF MISSING LIMBS.
EVEN A CHILD KNOWS THAT A SEVERED ARM COULDN'T SURVIVE! IT WOULD DIE…IT WOULD ROT AWAY!
THEN EXPLAIN *THIS!*

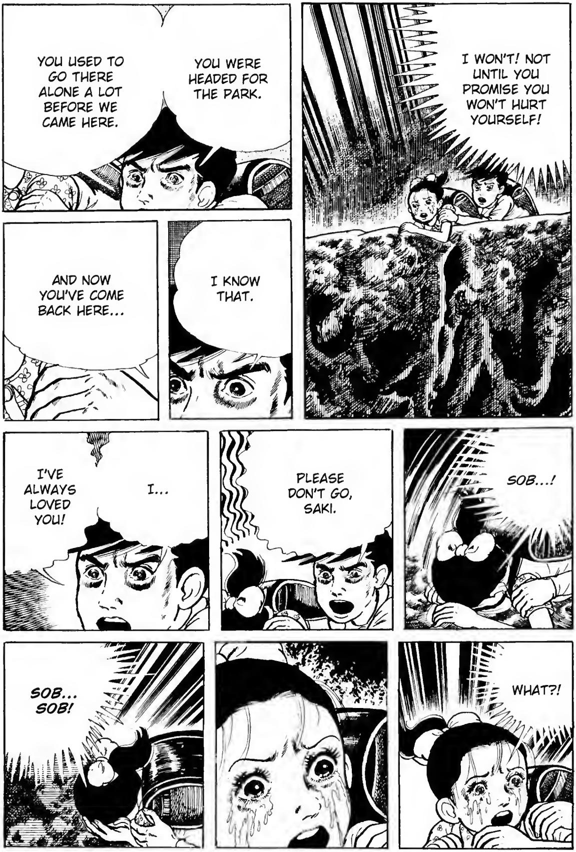

EXPLAIN THIS!
COME ON!
URGGH ...!
AIEEE!

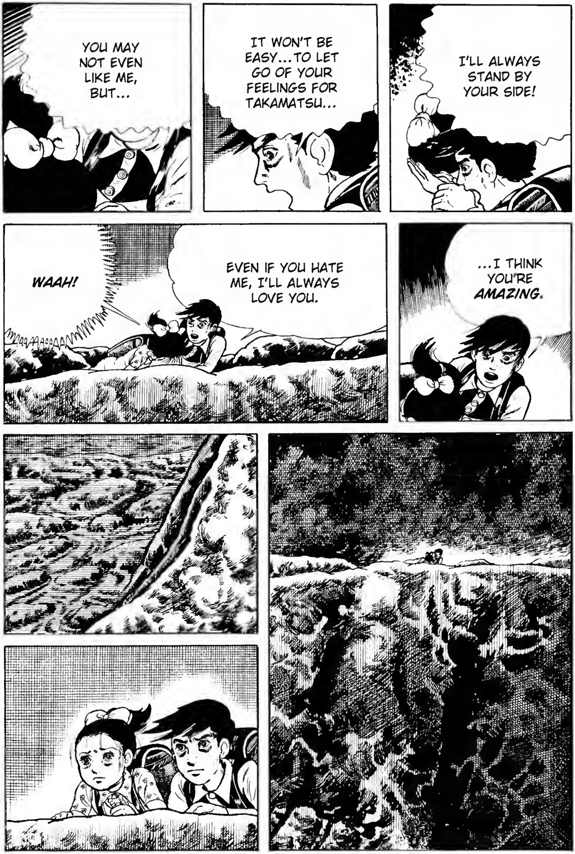

SO TELL ME! WHY DON'T YOU TRY TOUCHING IT!
EVEN A CHILD KNOWS YOU CAN'T SURVIVE WHEN HALF YOUR HEAD'S MISSING!
AGGGH!
ULGGH...!
HA HA HA HA!
MY ARM'S NOT GONE! IT'S JUST NOT HERE!
THEY'RE IN THE DESERT! HALF MY FACE AND MY ARM ARE IN THE DESERT!
I CAN SEE IT CLEARLY!
HELP MEEE! OH, HERE COMES A GIRL! HEY!

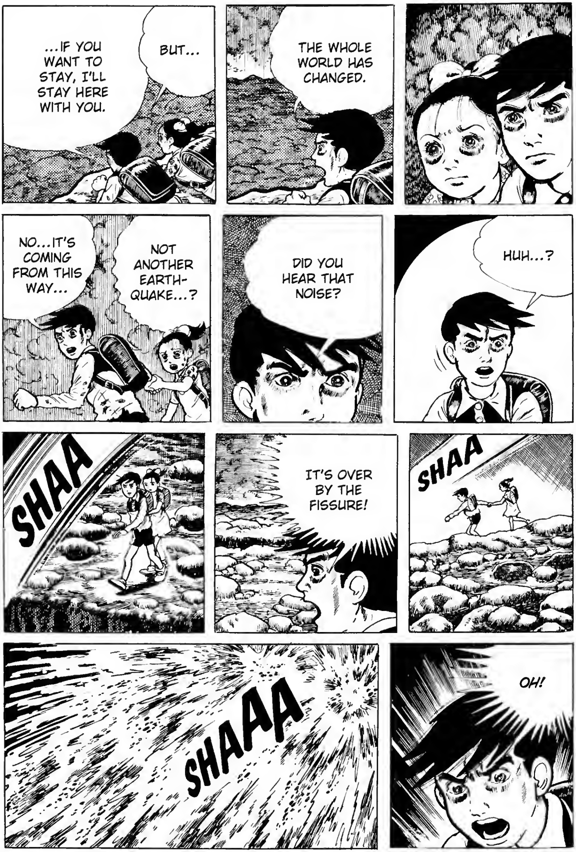


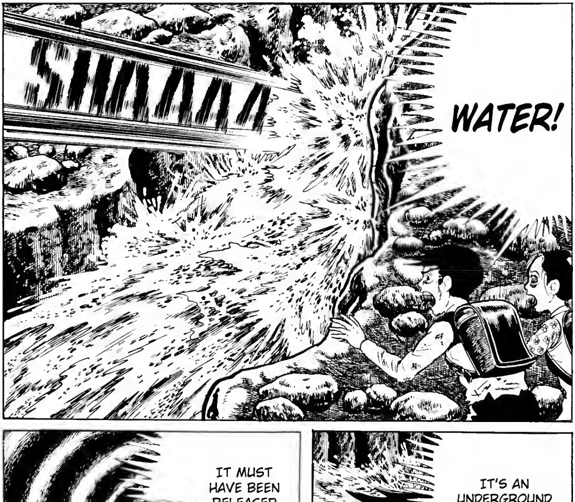

SAKI!
IT'S ME!
WAIT!

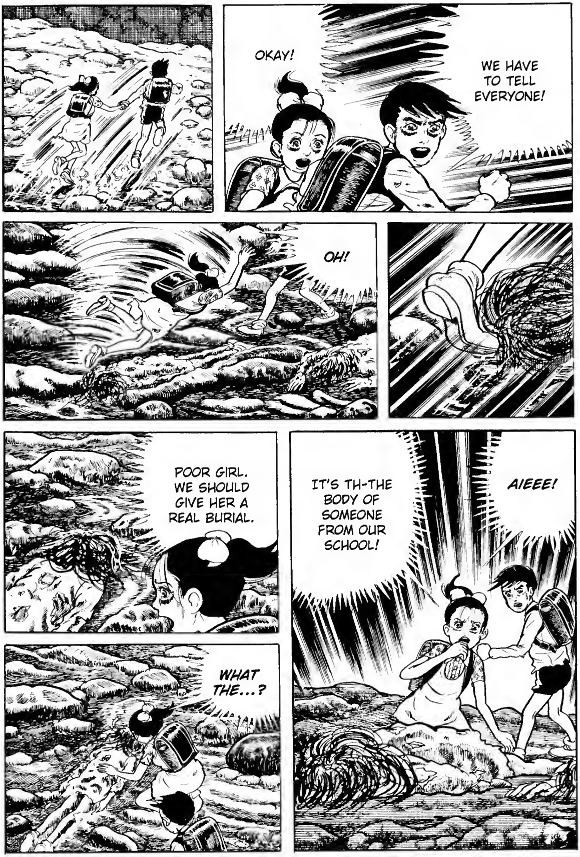

DON'T!
LET GO OF ME!
YOU WERE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF...!

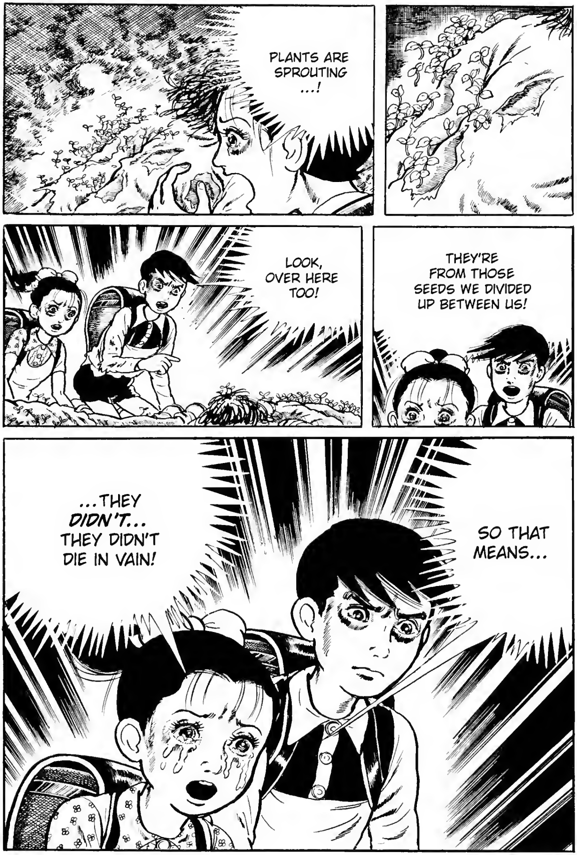

I WON'T! NOT UNTIL YOU PROMISE YOU WON'T HURT YOURSELF!
YOU WERE HEADED FOR THE PARK.
YOU USED TO GO THERE ALONE A LOT BEFORE WE CAME HERE.
I KNOW THAT.
AND NOW YOU'VE COME BACK HERE...
SOB...!
PLEASE DON'T GO, SAKI.
I...
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU!
WHAT?!
SOB... SOB!

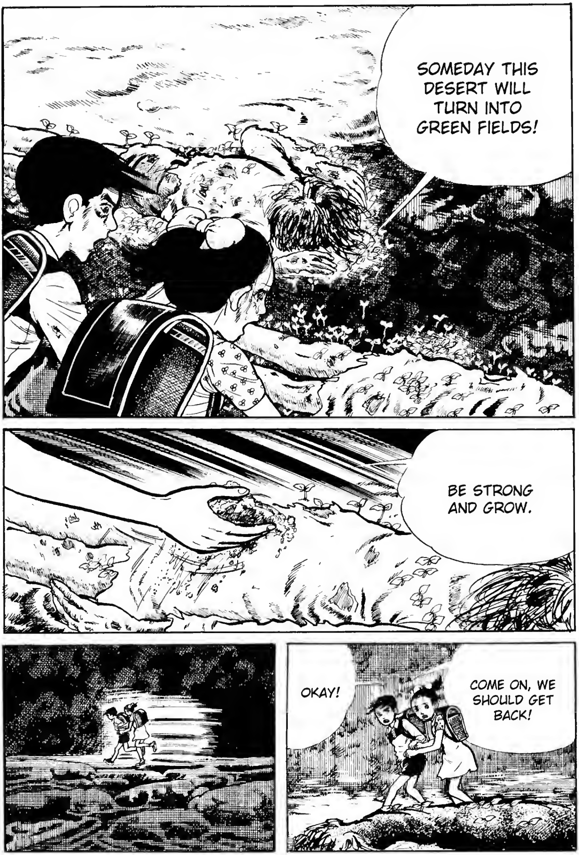

YOU MAY NOT EVEN LIKE ME, BUT...
IT WON'T BE EASY...TO LET GO OF YOUR FEELINGS FOR TAKAMATSU...
I'LL ALWAYS STAND BY YOUR SIDE!
*WAAH!*
EVEN IF YOU HATE ME, I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.
...I THINK YOU'RE *AMAZING*.

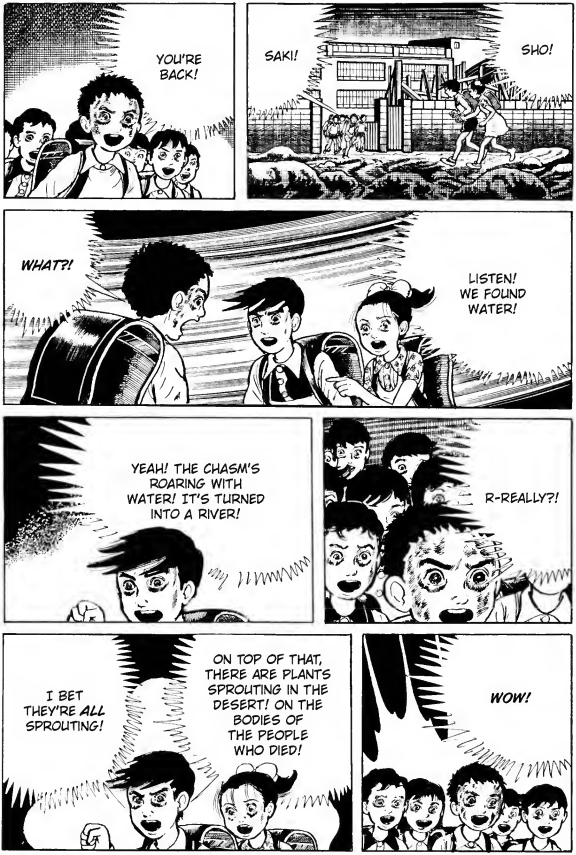

...IF YOU WANT TO STAY, I'LL STAY HERE WITH YOU.
BUT...
THE WHOLE WORLD HAS CHANGED.
NOT ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE...?
NO...IT'S COMING FROM THIS WAY...
DID YOU HEAR THAT NOISE?
HUH...?
SHAA
IT'S OVER BY THE FISSURE!
SHAA
SHAAA
OH!

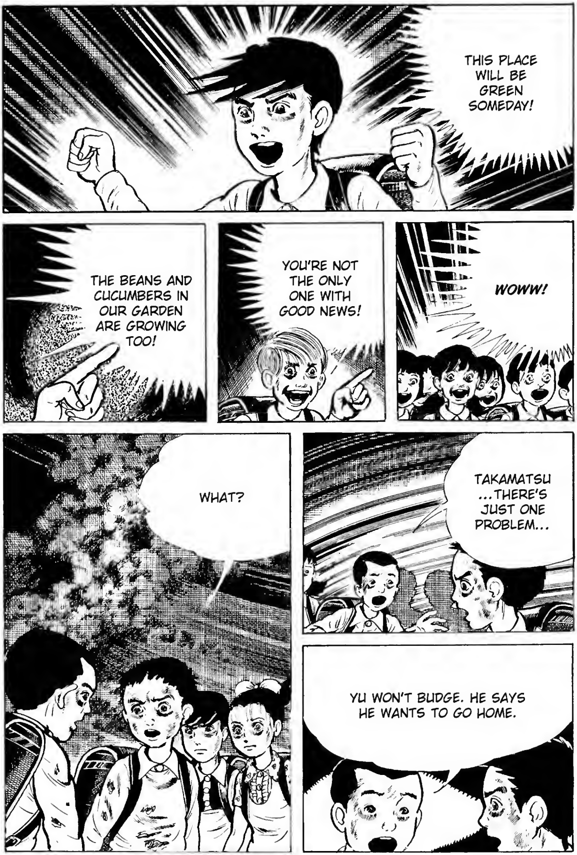

SHAAA
WATER!
IT'S AN UNDERGROUND SPRING!
IT MUST HAVE BEEN RELEASED BY THE VOLCANO ERUPTING!
DO YOU FEEL THAT? IT'S A BREEZE!
WOW!
FRESH AIR! THE WIND'S PICKING UP!

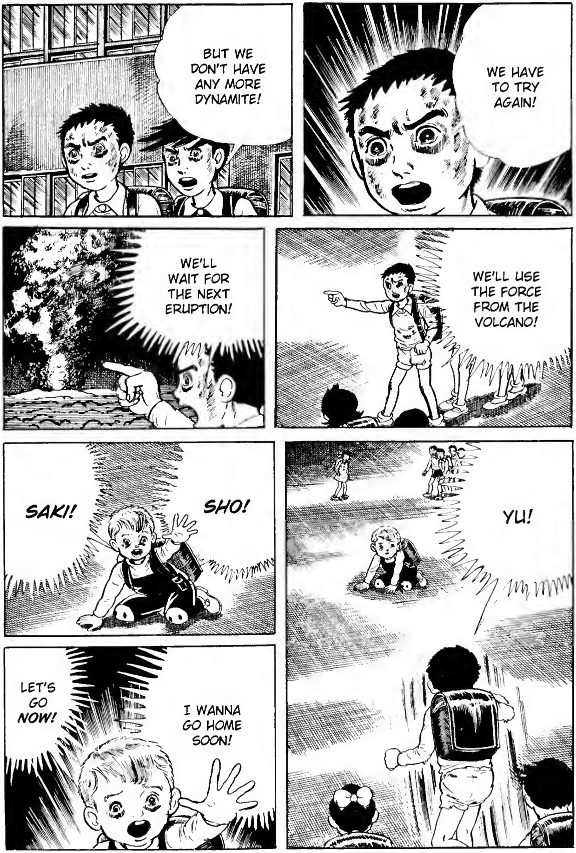

WE HAVE TO TELL EVERYONE!
OKAY!
OH!
AIEEE!
IT'S TH-THE BODY OF SOMEONE FROM OUR SCHOOL!
POOR GIRL. WE SHOULD GIVE HER A REAL BURIAL.
WHAT THE...?

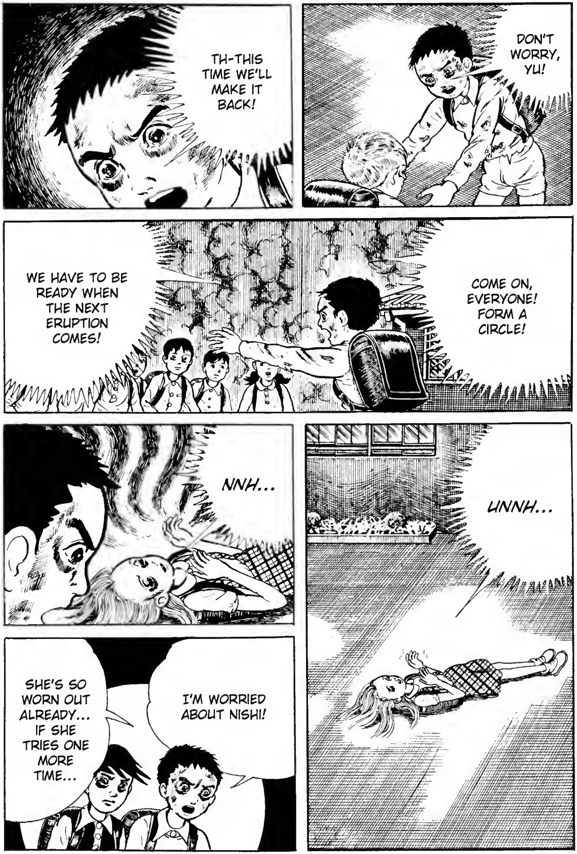

PLANTS ARE SPROUTING ...!
LOOK, OVER HERE TOO!
THEY'RE FROM THOSE SEEDS WE DIVIDED UP BETWEEN US!
SO THAT MEANS...
...THEY *DIDN'T...* THEY DIDN'T DIE IN VAIN!

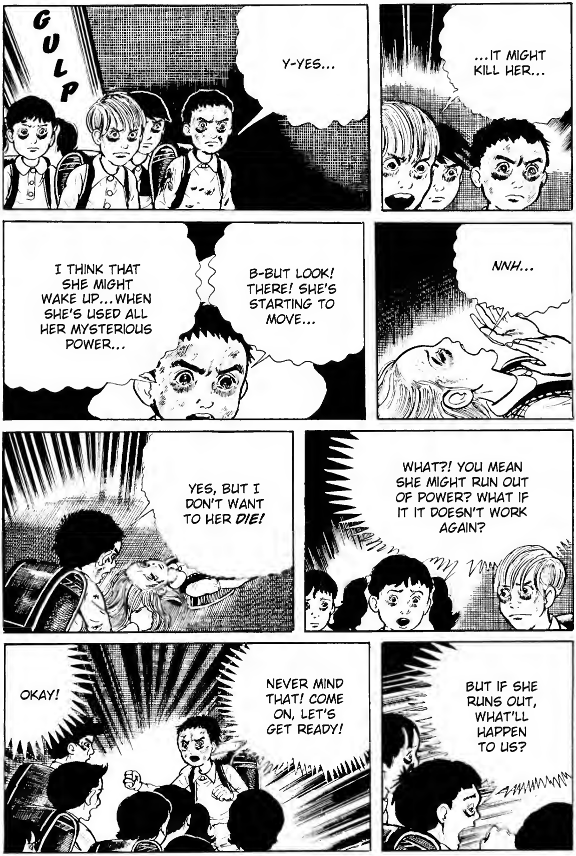

SOMEDAY THIS DESERT WILL TURN INTO GREEN FIELDS!
BE STRONG AND GROW.
COME ON, WE SHOULD GET BACK!
OKAY!

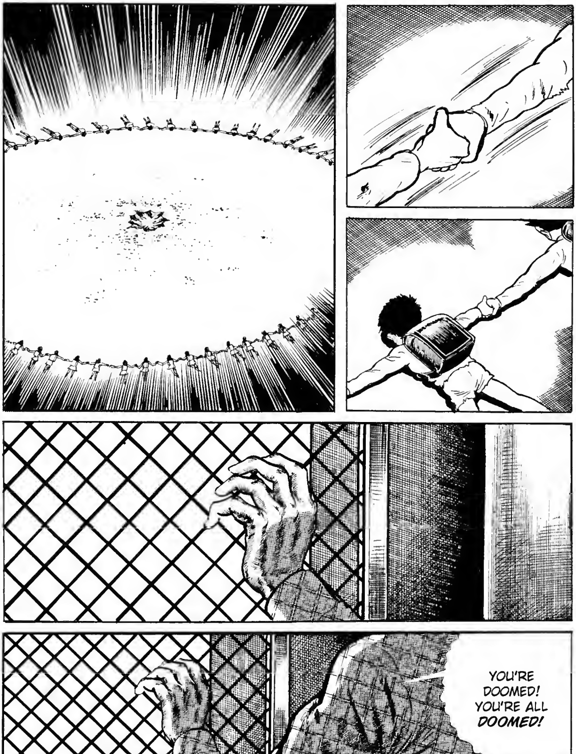

YOU'RE BACK!
SHO!
SAKI!
LISTEN! WE FOUND WATER!
WHAT?!
YEAH! THE CHASM'S ROARING WITH WATER! IT'S TURNED INTO A RIVER!
R-REALLY?!
ON TOP OF THAT, THERE ARE PLANTS SPROUTING IN THE DESERT! ON THE BODIES OF THE PEOPLE WHO DIED!
I BET THEY'RE *ALL* SPROUTING!
*WOW!*

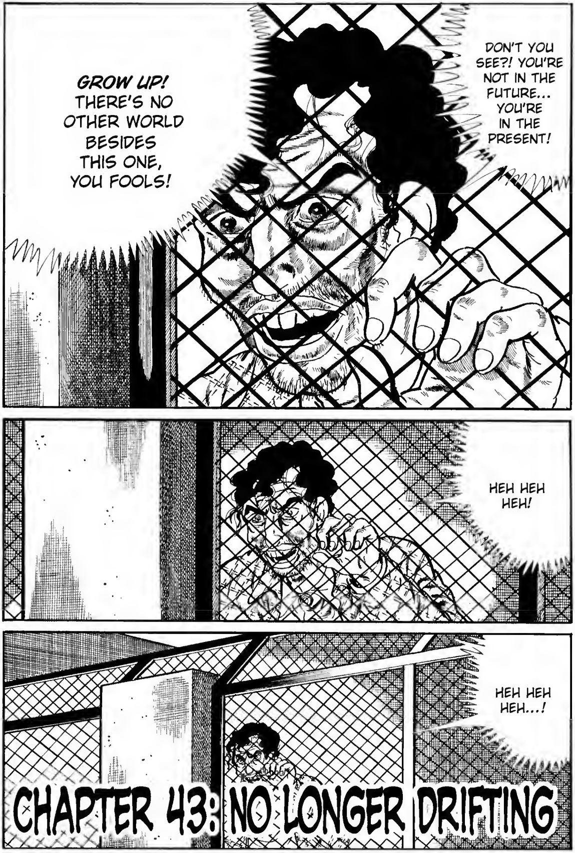

THIS PLACE WILL BE GREEN SOMEDAY!
THE BEANS AND CUCUMBERS IN OUR GARDEN ARE GROWING TOO!
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WITH GOOD NEWS!
WOWW!
WHAT?
TAKAMATSU ...THERE'S JUST ONE PROBLEM...
YU WON'T BUDGE. HE SAYS HE WANTS TO GO HOME.


BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE DYNAMITE!
WE HAVE TO TRY AGAIN!
WE'LL WAIT FOR THE NEXT ERUPTION!
WE'LL USE THE FORCE FROM THE VOLCANO!
SAKI!
SHO!
YU!
LET'S GO NOW!
I WANNA GO HOME SOON!

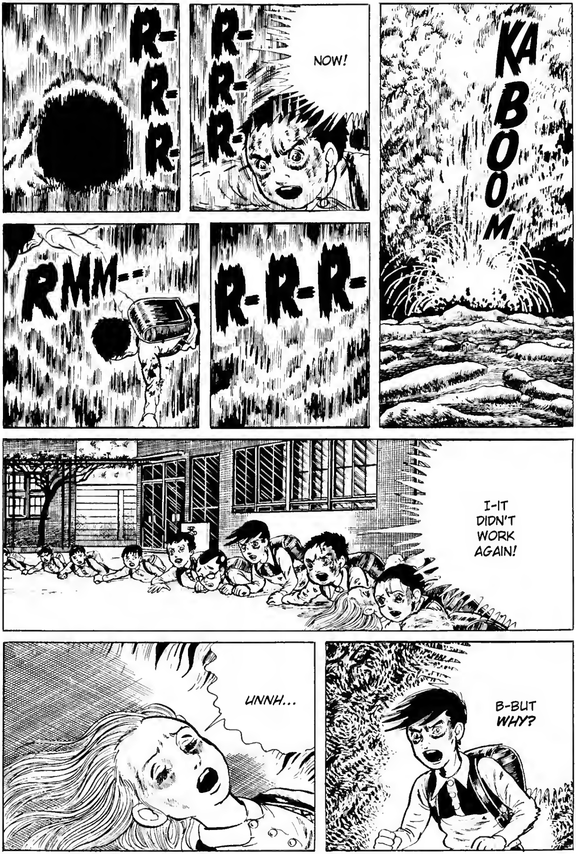

DON'T WORRY, YU!
TH-THIS TIME WE'LL MAKE IT BACK!
COME ON, EVERYONE! FORM A CIRCLE!
WE HAVE TO BE READY WHEN THE NEXT ERUPTION COMES!
UNNH...
NNH...
I'M WORRIED ABOUT NISHI!
SHE'S SO WORN OUT ALREADY... IF SHE TRIES ONE MORE TIME...

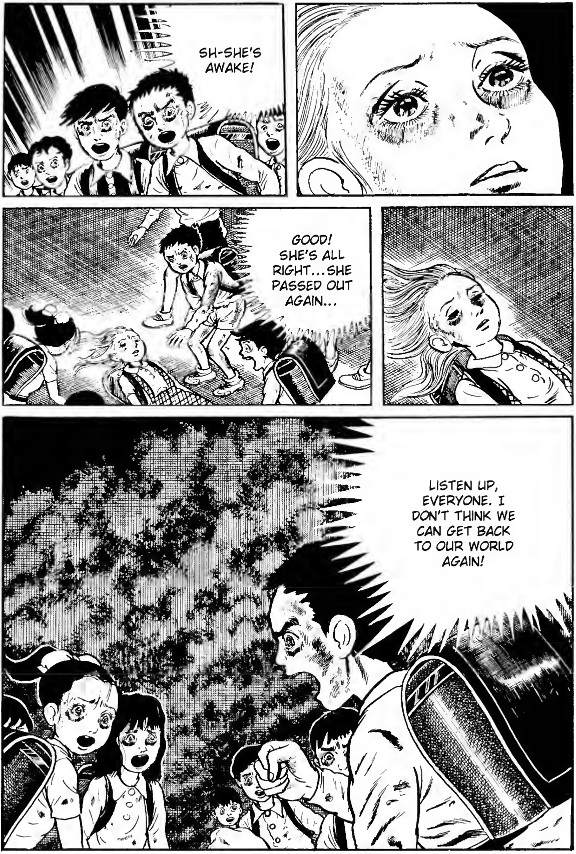

GULP
Y-YES...
...IT MIGHT KILL HER...
I THINK THAT SHE MIGHT WAKE UP...WHEN SHE'S USED ALL HER MYSTERIOUS POWER...
B-BUT LOOK! THERE! SHE'S STARTING TO MOVE...
*NNH...*
YES, BUT I DON'T WANT TO HER *DIE!*
WHAT?! YOU MEAN SHE MIGHT RUN OUT OF POWER? WHAT IF IT IT DOESN'T WORK AGAIN?
OKAY!
NEVER MIND THAT! COME ON, LET'S GET READY!
BUT IF SHE RUNS OUT, WHAT'LL HAPPEN TO US?

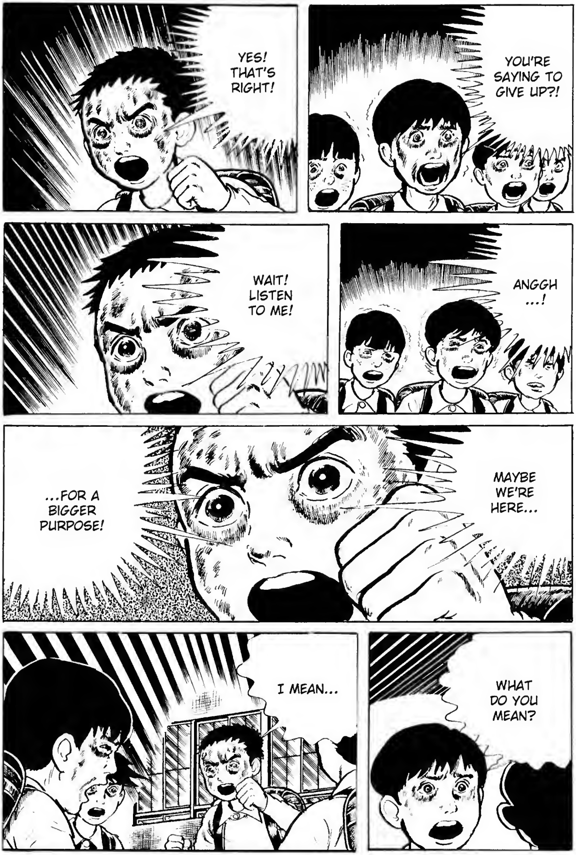

YOU'RE DOOMED! YOU'RE ALL *DOOMED!*

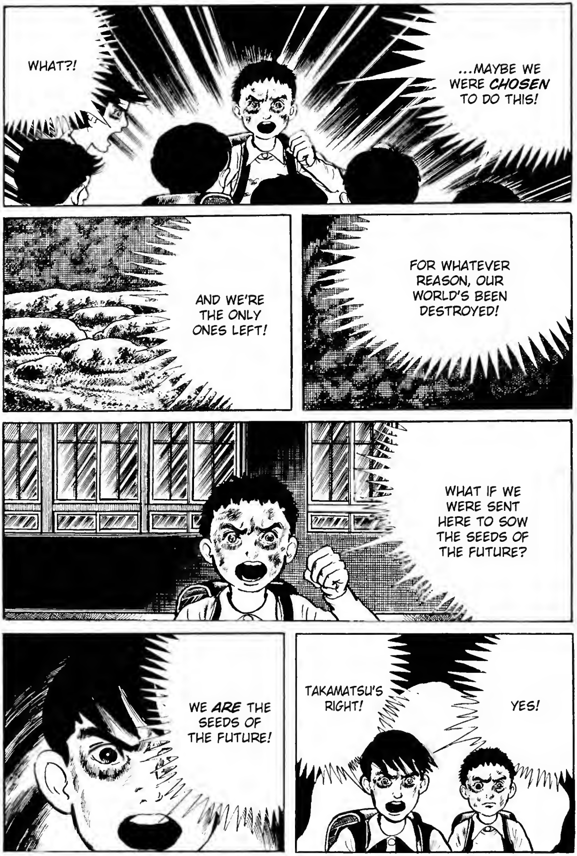

DON'T YOU SEE?! YOU'RE NOT IN THE FUTURE... YOU'RE IN THE PRESENT!
*GROW UP!* THERE'S NO OTHER WORLD BESIDES THIS ONE, YOU FOOLS!
HEH HEH HEH!
HEH HEH HEH...!

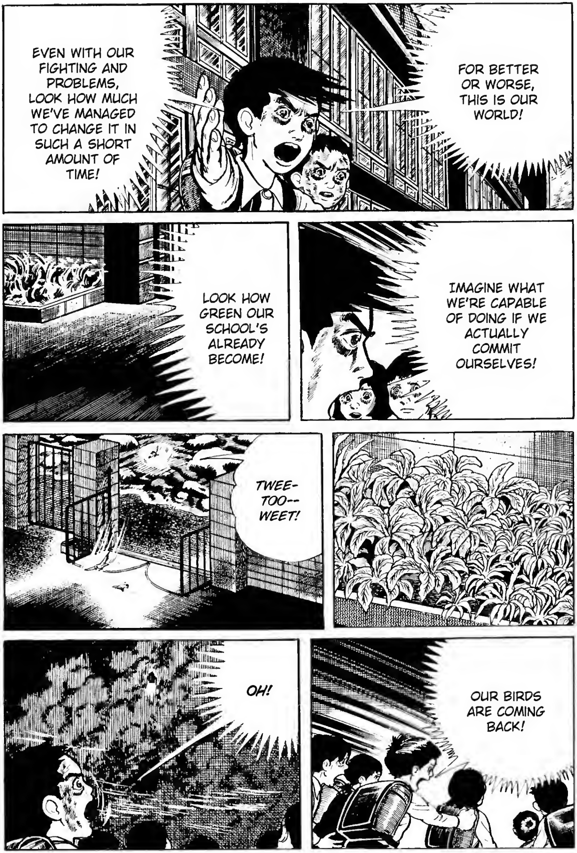
# CHAPTER 43: NO LONGER DRIFTING

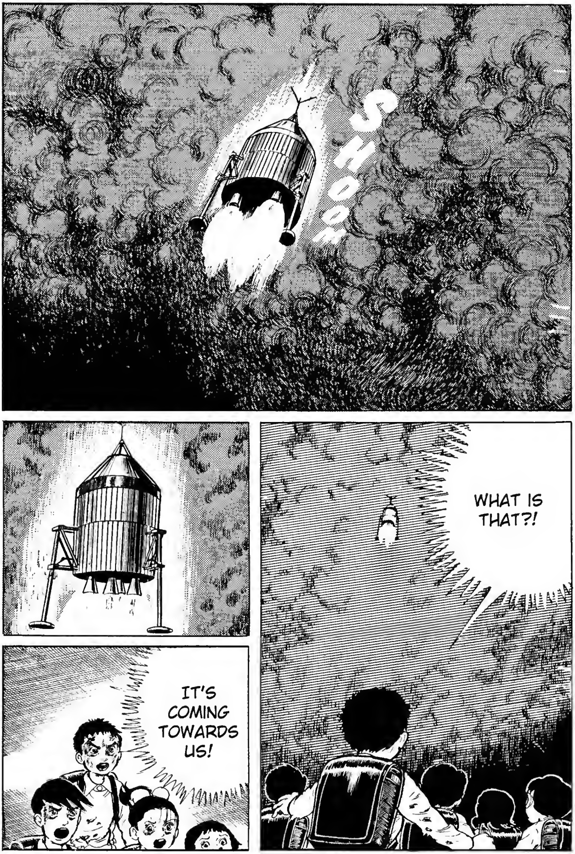

R-R-R-
R-R-R-
NOW!
RMM--
R-R-R-
KA BOOM
I-IT DIDN'T WORK AGAIN!
UNNH...
B-BUT *WHY?*

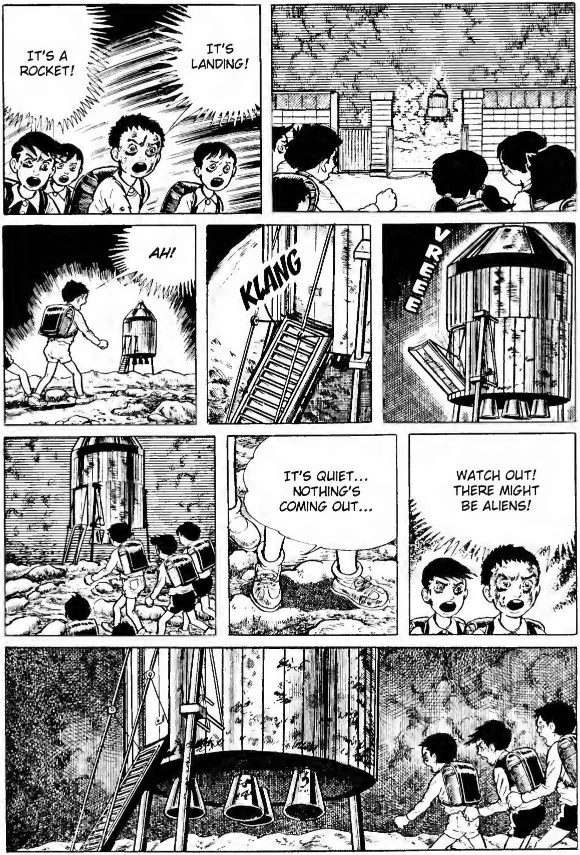

SH-SHE'S AWAKE!
GOOD! SHE'S ALL RIGHT...SHE PASSED OUT AGAIN...
LISTEN UP, EVERYONE. I DON'T THINK WE CAN GET BACK TO OUR WORLD AGAIN!

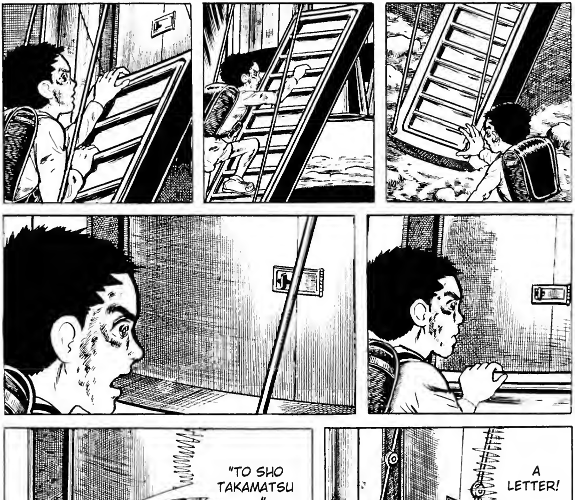

YES! THAT'S RIGHT!
YOU'RE SAYING TO GIVE UP?!
WAIT! LISTEN TO ME!
ANGGH ...!
MAYBE WE'RE HERE...
...FOR A BIGGER PURPOSE!
I MEAN...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

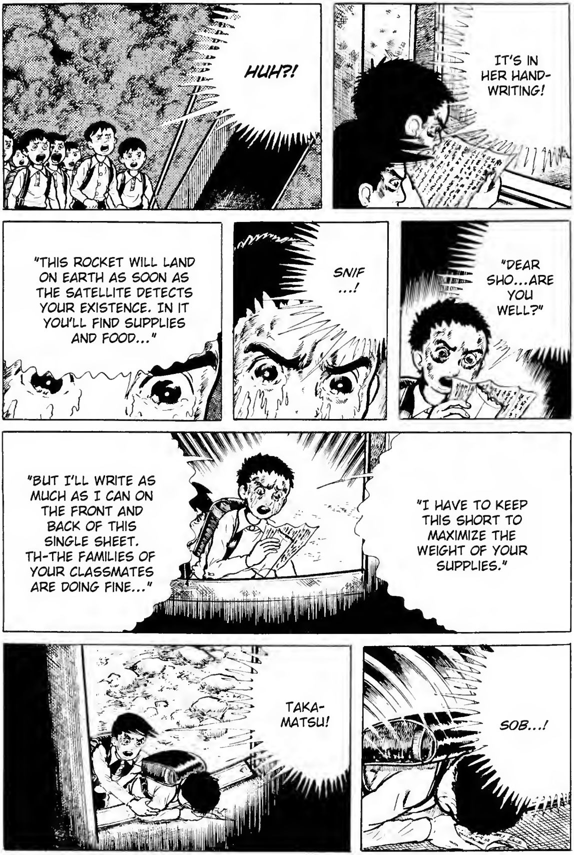

...MAYBE WE WERE *CHOSEN* TO DO THIS!
WHAT?!
FOR WHATEVER REASON, OUR WORLD'S BEEN DESTROYED!
AND WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT!
WHAT IF WE WERE SENT HERE TO SOW THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE?
YES!
TAKAMATSU'S RIGHT!
WE *ARE* THE SEEDS OF THE FUTURE!

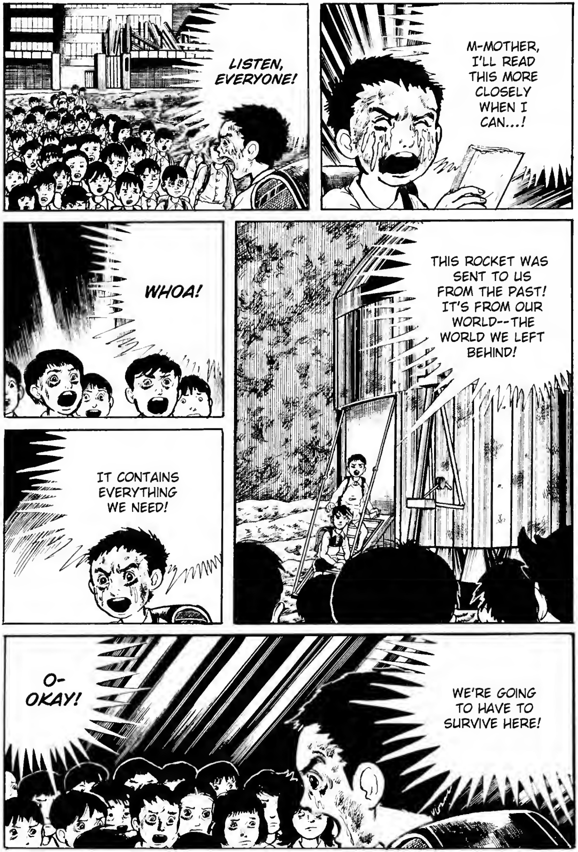

EVEN WITH OUR FIGHTING AND PROBLEMS, LOOK HOW MUCH WE'VE MANAGED TO CHANGE IT IN SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME!
FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THIS IS OUR WORLD!
LOOK HOW GREEN OUR SCHOOL'S ALREADY BECOME!
IMAGINE WHAT WE'RE CAPABLE OF DOING IF WE ACTUALLY COMMIT OURSELVES!
TWEE-TOO--WEET!
OH!
OUR BIRDS ARE COMING BACK!

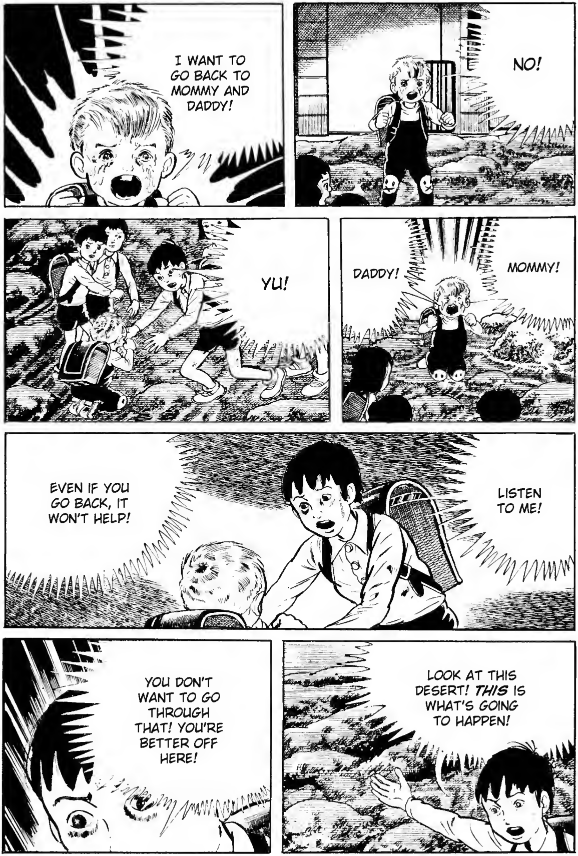

SHOOF
WHAT IS THAT?!
IT'S COMING TOWARDS US!

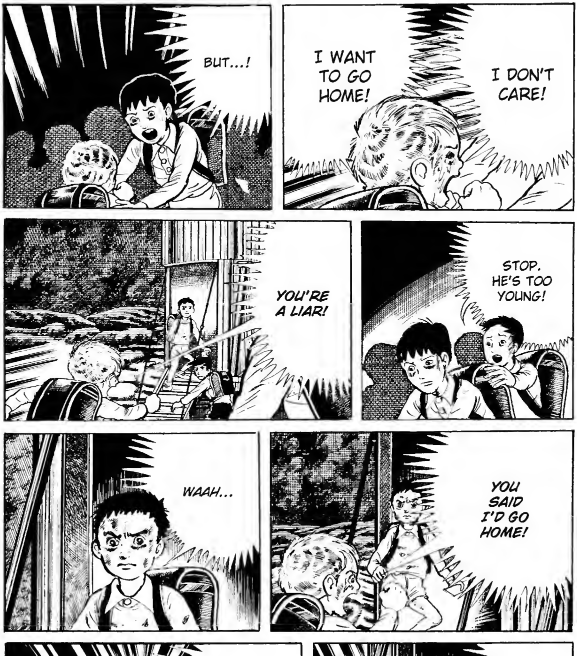

IT'S A ROCKET!
IT'S LANDING!
AH!
KLANG
VREEE
IT'S QUIET... NOTHING'S COMING OUT...
WATCH OUT! THERE MIGHT BE ALIENS!

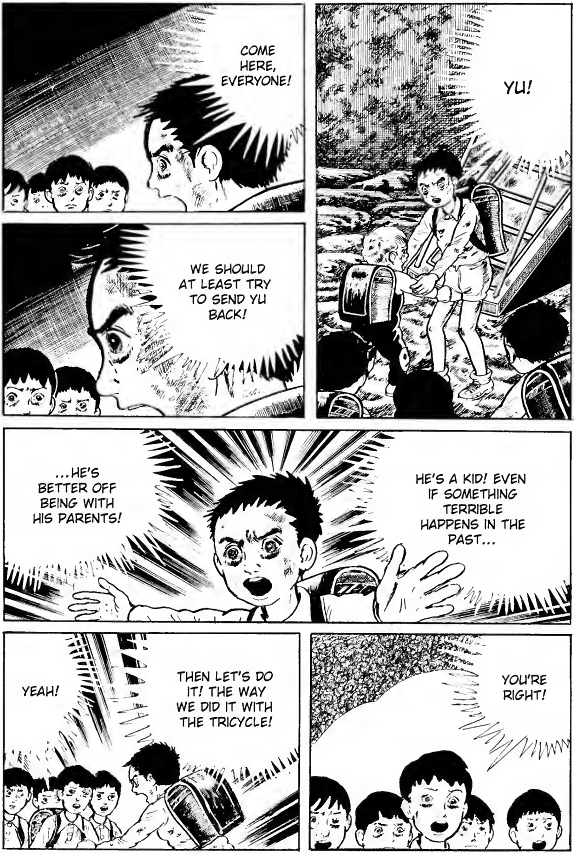

A LETTER!
"TO SHO TAKAMATSU ..."
高松 翔さま
IT'S FROM MY MOTHER!
WH-WHAT?!

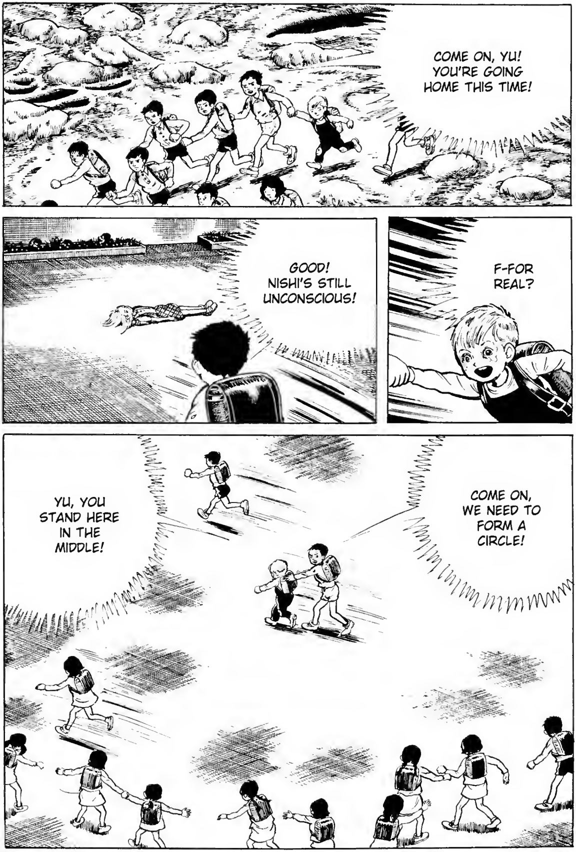

IT'S IN HER HAND-WRITING!
HUH?!
"DEAR SHO...ARE YOU WELL?"
SNIF ...!
"THIS ROCKET WILL LAND ON EARTH AS SOON AS THE SATELLITE DETECTS YOUR EXISTENCE. IN IT YOU'LL FIND SUPPLIES AND FOOD..."
"I HAVE TO KEEP THIS SHORT TO MAXIMIZE THE WEIGHT OF YOUR SUPPLIES."
"BUT I'LL WRITE AS MUCH AS I CAN ON THE FRONT AND BACK OF THIS SINGLE SHEET. TH-THE FAMILIES OF YOUR CLASSMATES ARE DOING FINE..."
SOB...!
TAKA-MATSU!

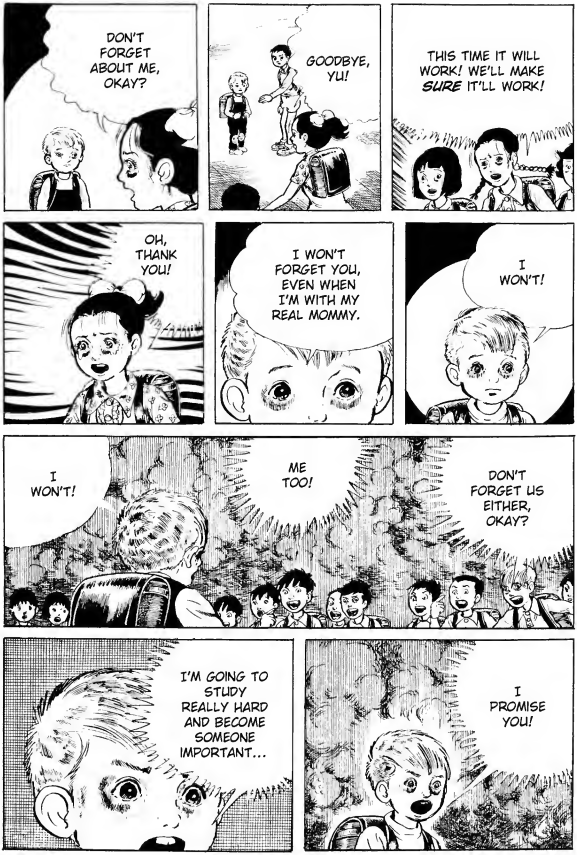

M-MOTHER, I'LL READ THIS MORE CLOSELY WHEN I CAN...!
LISTEN, EVERYONE!
THIS ROCKET WAS SENT TO US FROM THE PAST! IT'S FROM OUR WORLD--THE WORLD WE LEFT BEHIND!
WHOA!
IT CONTAINS EVERYTHING WE NEED!
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SURVIVE HERE!
O-OKAY!

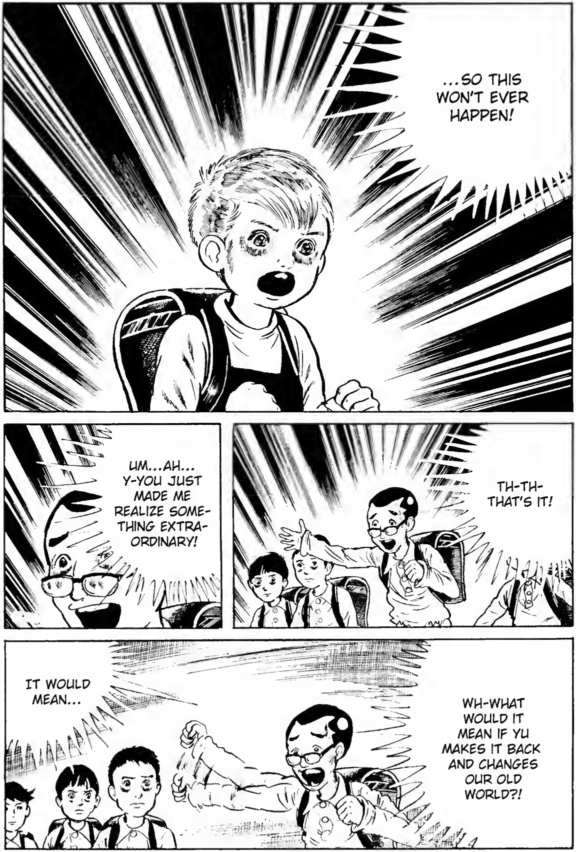

I WANT TO GO BACK TO MOMMY AND DADDY!
NO!
YU!
DADDY!
MOMMY!
EVEN IF YOU GO BACK, IT WON'T HELP!
LISTEN TO ME!
YOU DON'T WANT TO GO THROUGH THAT! YOU'RE BETTER OFF HERE!
LOOK AT THIS DESERT! *THIS* IS WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN!

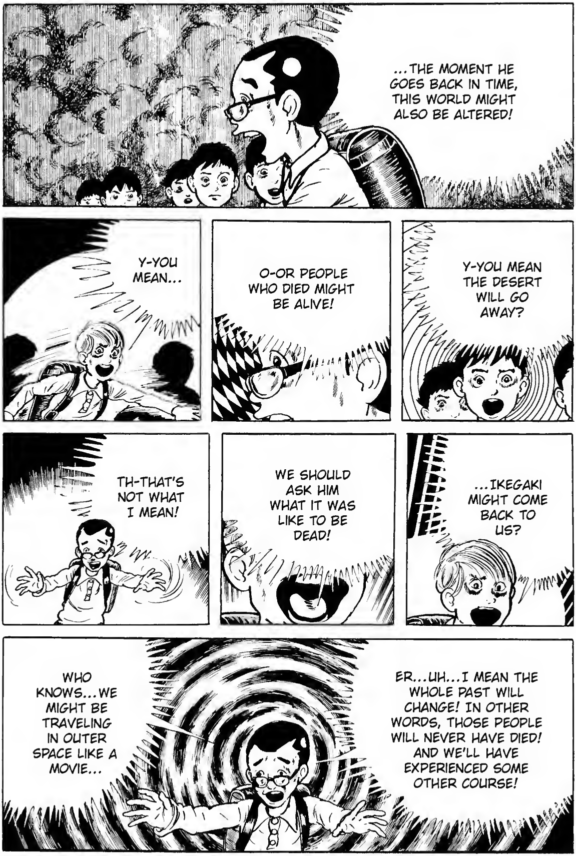

BUT...!
I DON'T CARE!
I WANT TO GO HOME!
YOU'RE A LIAR!
STOP. HE'S TOO YOUNG!
WAAH...
YOU SAID I'D GO HOME!
LIAR!
LIAR!

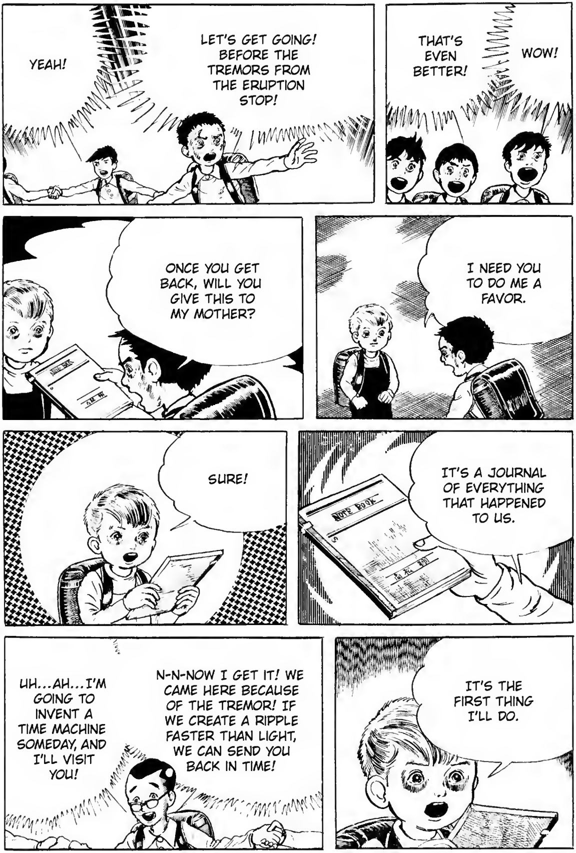

YU!
COME HERE, EVERYONE!
WE SHOULD AT LEAST TRY TO SEND YU BACK!
HE'S A KID! EVEN IF SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS IN THE PAST...
...HE'S BETTER OFF BEING WITH HIS PARENTS!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
THEN LET'S DO IT! THE WAY WE DID IT WITH THE TRICYCLE!
YEAH!

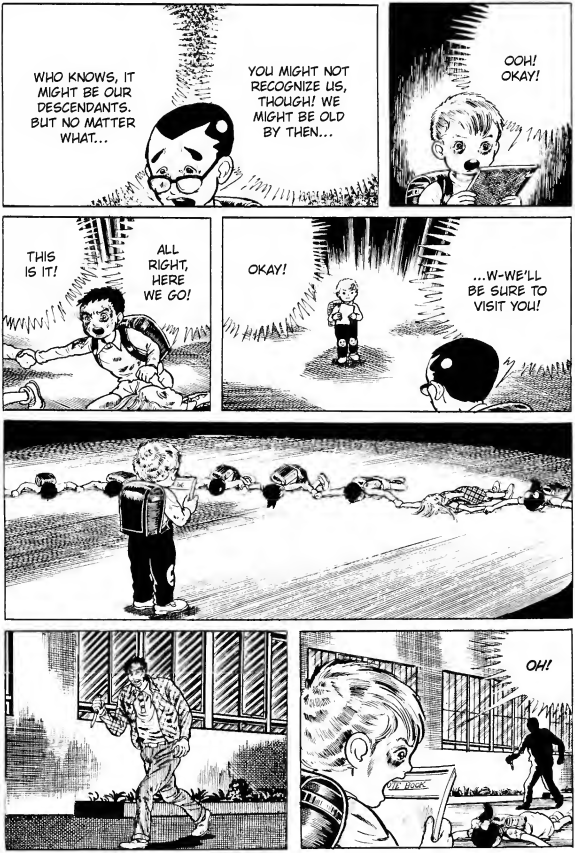

COME ON, YU! YOU'RE GOING HOME THIS TIME!
GOOD! NISHI'S STILL UNCONSCIOUS!
F-FOR REAL?
YU, YOU STAND HERE IN THE MIDDLE!
COME ON, WE NEED TO FORM A CIRCLE!

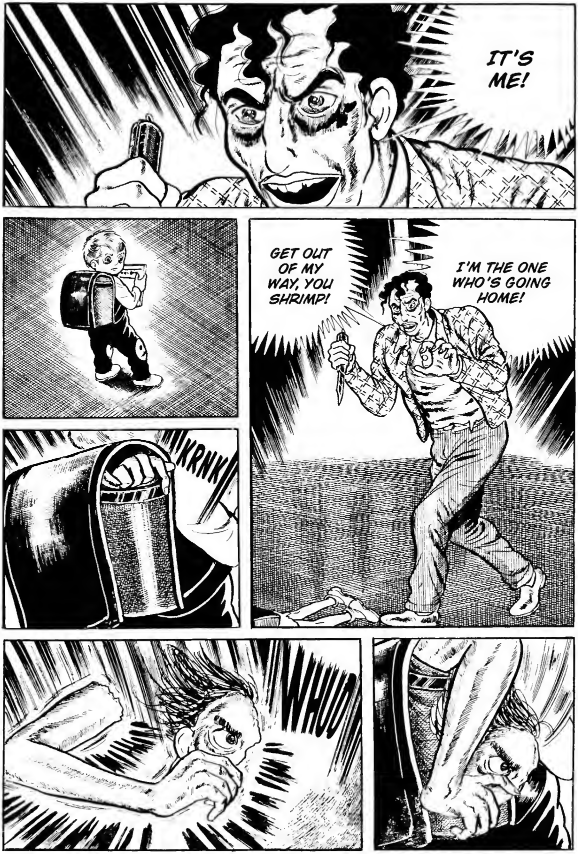

DON'T FORGET ABOUT ME, OKAY?
GOODBYE, YU!
THIS TIME IT WILL WORK! WE'LL MAKE *SURE* IT'LL WORK!
OH, THANK YOU!
I WON'T FORGET YOU, EVEN WHEN I'M WITH MY REAL MOMMY.
I WON'T!
I WON'T!
ME TOO!
DON'T FORGET US EITHER, OKAY?
I'M GOING TO STUDY REALLY HARD AND BECOME SOMEONE IMPORTANT...
I PROMISE YOU!

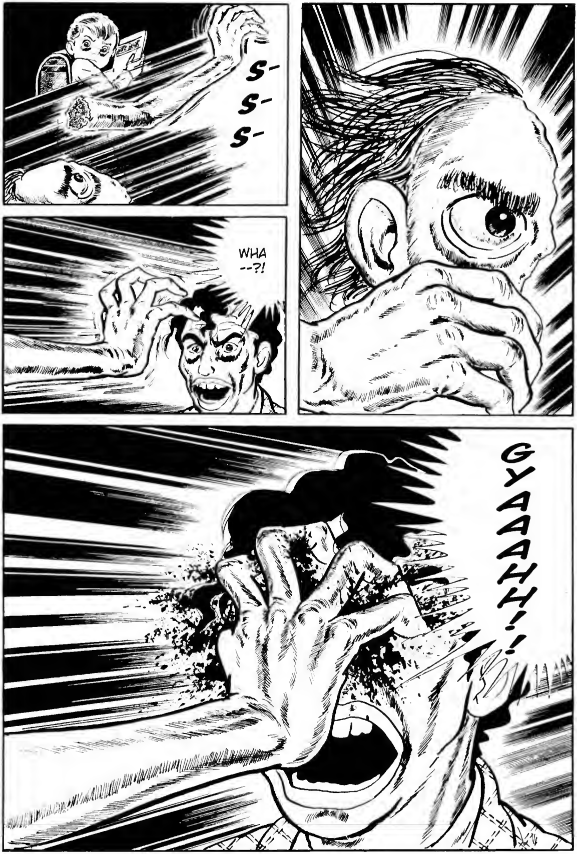

...SO THIS WON'T EVER HAPPEN!
TH-TH-THAT'S IT!
UM...AH... Y-YOU JUST MADE ME REALIZE SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY!
WH-WHAT WOULD IT MEAN IF YU MAKES IT BACK AND CHANGES OUR OLD WORLD?!
IT WOULD MEAN...

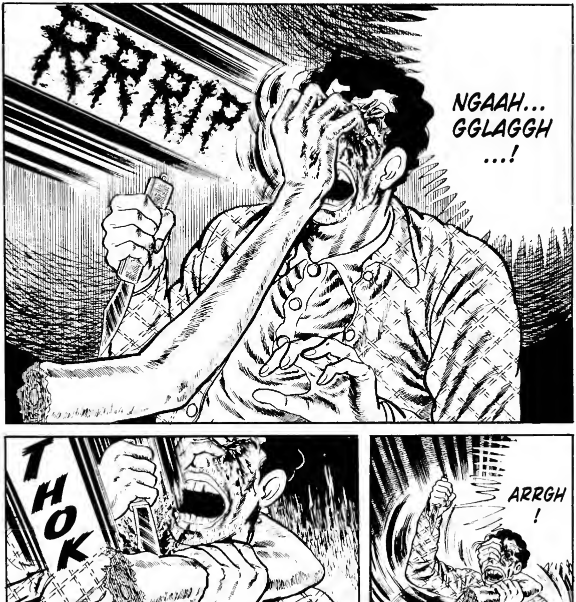

...THE MOMENT HE GOES BACK IN TIME, THIS WORLD MIGHT ALSO BE ALTERED!
Y-YOU MEAN THE DESERT WILL GO AWAY?
O-OR PEOPLE WHO DIED MIGHT BE ALIVE!
Y-YOU MEAN...
...IKEGAKI MIGHT COME BACK TO US?
WE SHOULD ASK HIM WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE DEAD!
TH-THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN!
ER...UH...I MEAN THE WHOLE PAST WILL CHANGE! IN OTHER WORDS, THOSE PEOPLE WILL NEVER HAVE DIED! AND WE'LL HAVE EXPERIENCED SOME OTHER COURSE!
WHO KNOWS...WE MIGHT BE TRAVELING IN OUTER SPACE LIKE A MOVIE...

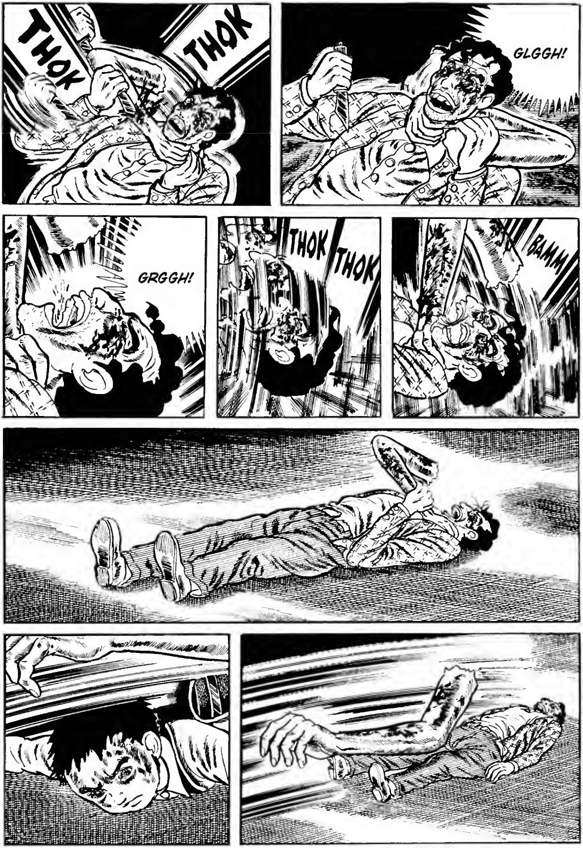

WOW!
THAT'S EVEN BETTER!
LET'S GET GOING! BEFORE THE TREMORS FROM THE ERUPTION STOP!
YEAH!
I NEED YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR.
ONCE YOU GET BACK, WILL YOU GIVE THIS TO MY MOTHER?
NOTE BOOK
IT'S A JOURNAL OF EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED TO US.
SURE!
IT'S THE FIRST THING I'LL DO.
N-N-NOW I GET IT! WE CAME HERE BECAUSE OF THE TREMOR! IF WE CREATE A RIPPLE FASTER THAN LIGHT, WE CAN SEND YOU BACK IN TIME!
UH...AH...I'M GOING TO INVENT A TIME MACHINE SOMEDAY, AND I'LL VISIT YOU!

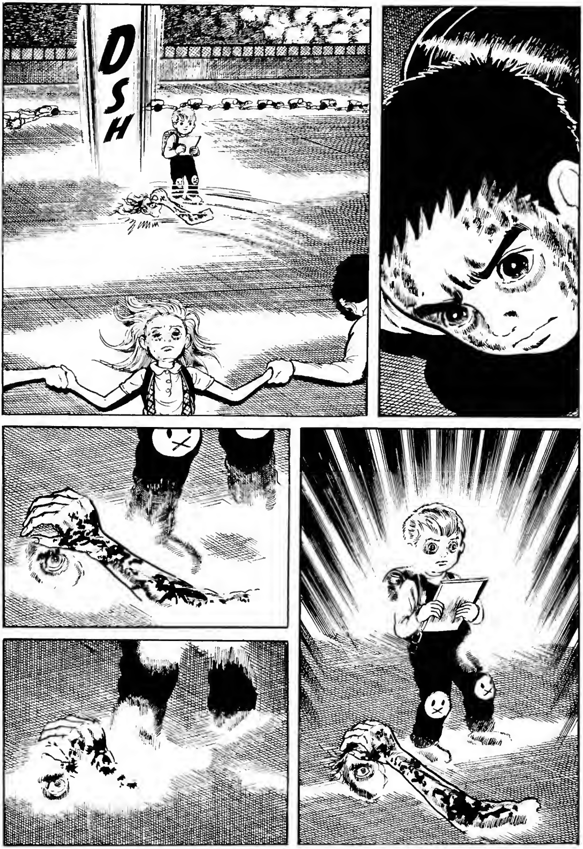

OOH! OKAY!
YOU MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE US, THOUGH! WE MIGHT BE OLD BY THEN...
WHO KNOWS, IT MIGHT BE OUR DESCENDANTS. BUT NO MATTER WHAT...
...W-WE'LL BE SURE TO VISIT YOU!
OKAY!
ALL RIGHT, HERE WE GO!
THIS IS IT!
OH!
OTE BOOK

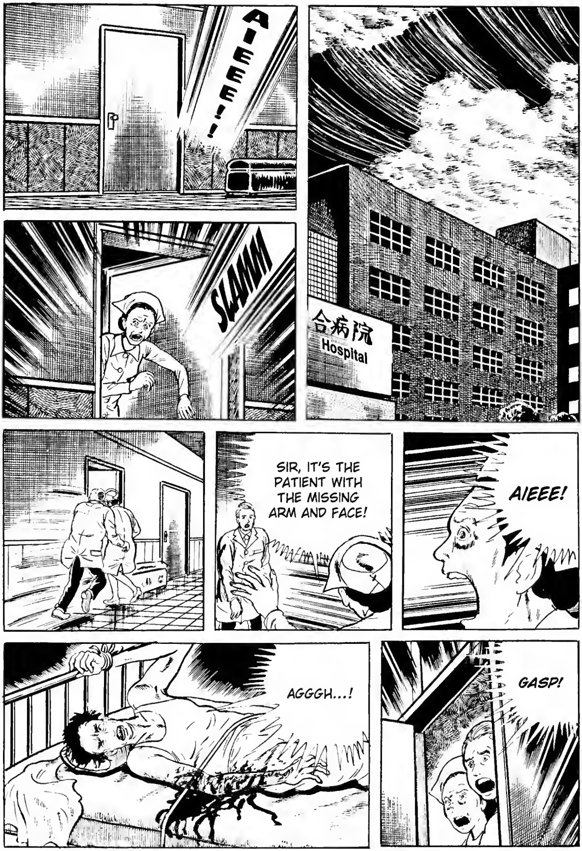

IT'S ME!
GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU SHRIMP!
I'M THE ONE WHO'S GOING HOME!
KRNK
WHUD

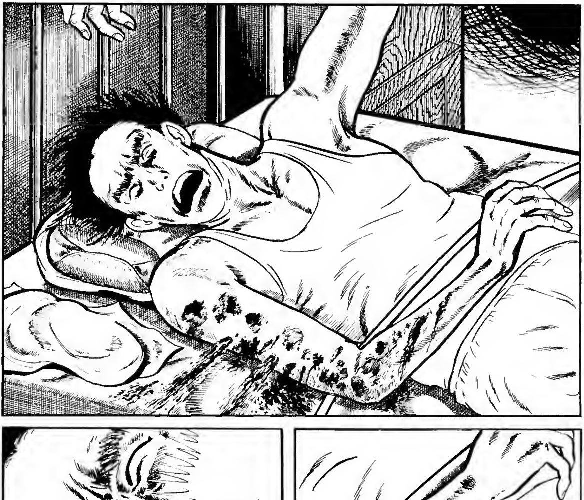

S- S- S-
WHA --?!
GYAAAHH!!

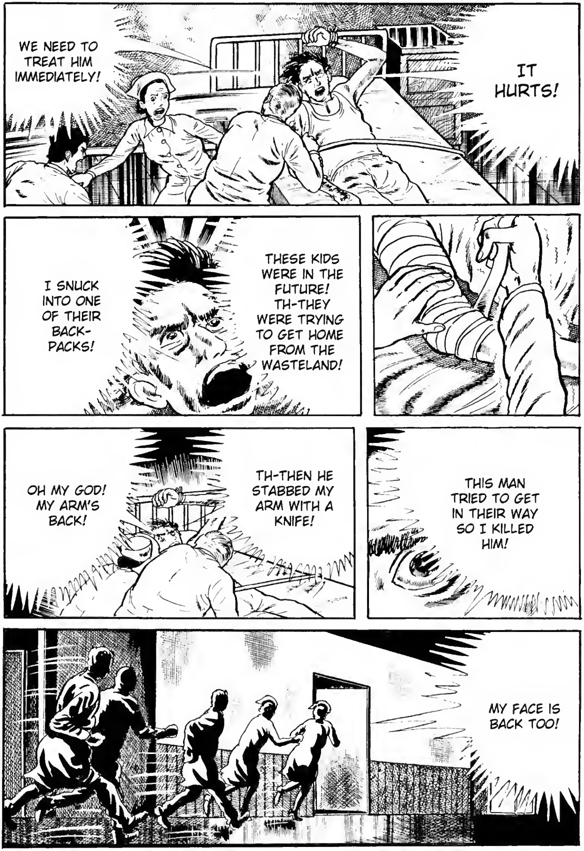

ARRRIP
NGAAH... GGLAGGH ...!
THOK
ARRGH !

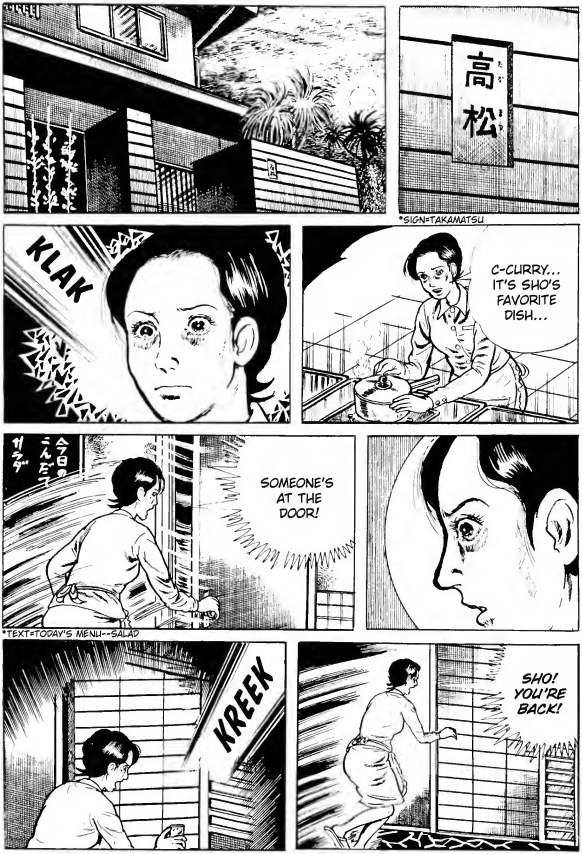

THOK
THOK
GLGGH!
GRGGH!
THOK
THOK
BAMM


DSH


合病院
Hospital
AIEEE!!
SLAMM
AIEEE!
SIR, IT'S THE PATIENT WITH THE MISSING ARM AND FACE!
GASP!
AGGGH...!

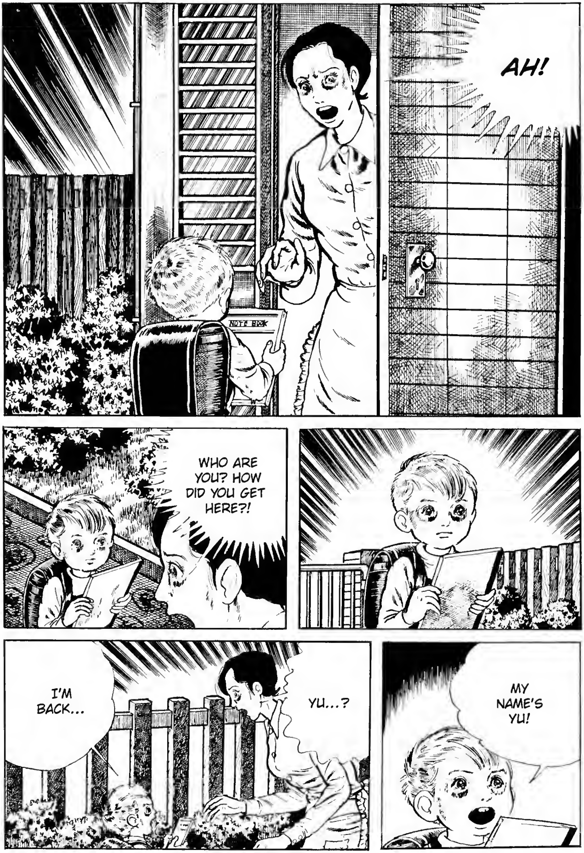

NGGH! AGGH...!
H-HELP ME! MY ARM!
GOOD LORD...!

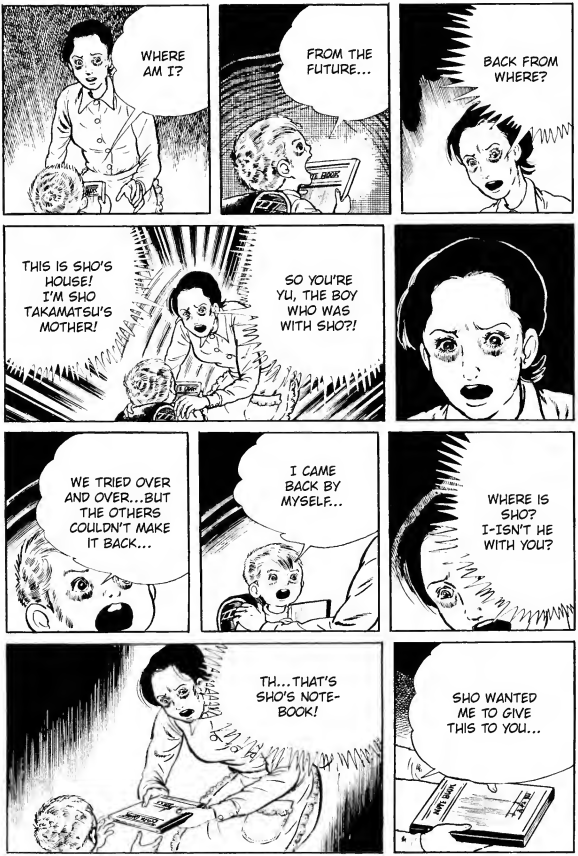

IT HURTS!
WE NEED TO TREAT HIM IMMEDIATELY!
THESE KIDS WERE IN THE FUTURE! TH-THEY WERE TRYING TO GET HOME FROM THE WASTELAND!
I SNUCK INTO ONE OF THEIR BACKPACKS!
THIS MAN TRIED TO GET IN THEIR WAY SO I KILLED HIM!
TH-THEN HE STABBED MY ARM WITH A KNIFE!
OH MY GOD! MY ARM'S BACK!
MY FACE IS BACK TOO!

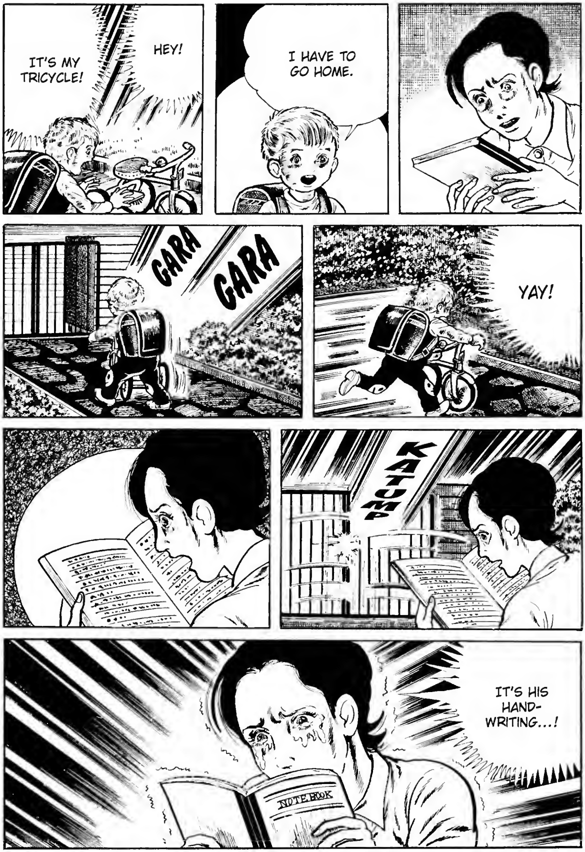

高
たか
松
まつ
KLAK
C-CURRY... IT'S SHO'S FAVORITE DISH...
今日のこんだて
サラダ
SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR!
KREEK
SHO! YOU'RE BACK!

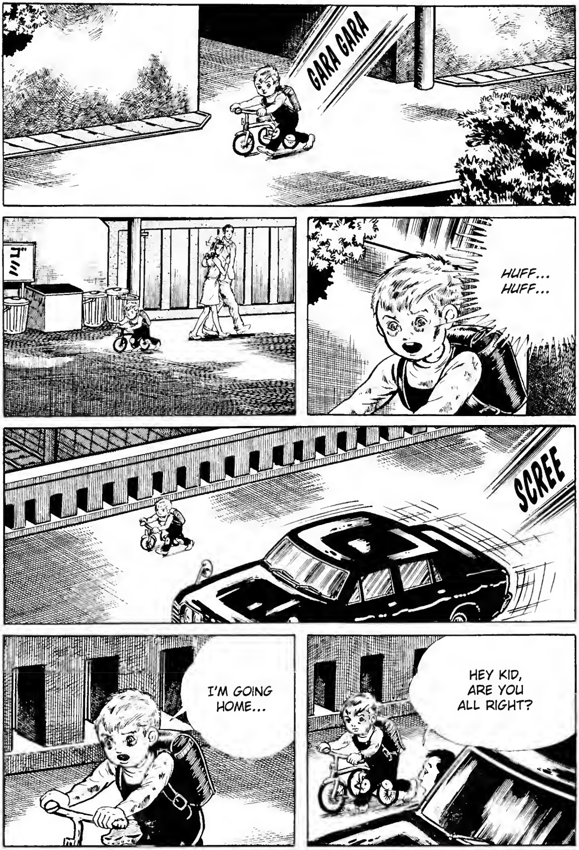
*SIGN=TAKAMATSU

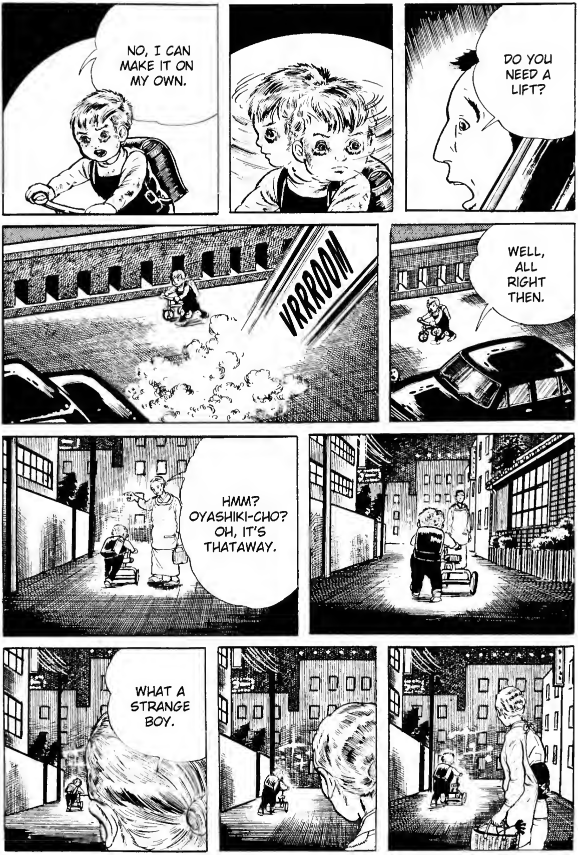
*TEXT=TODAY'S MENU--SALAD

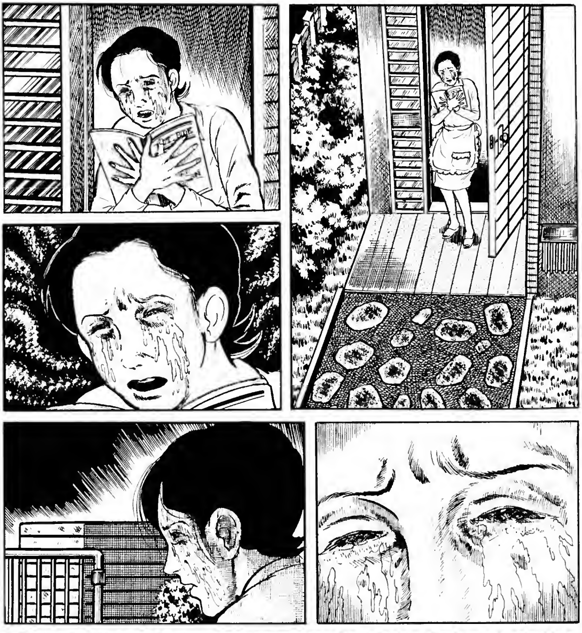

AH!
NOTE BOOK
WHO ARE YOU? HOW DID YOU GET HERE?!
I'M BACK...
YU...?
MY NAME'S YU!

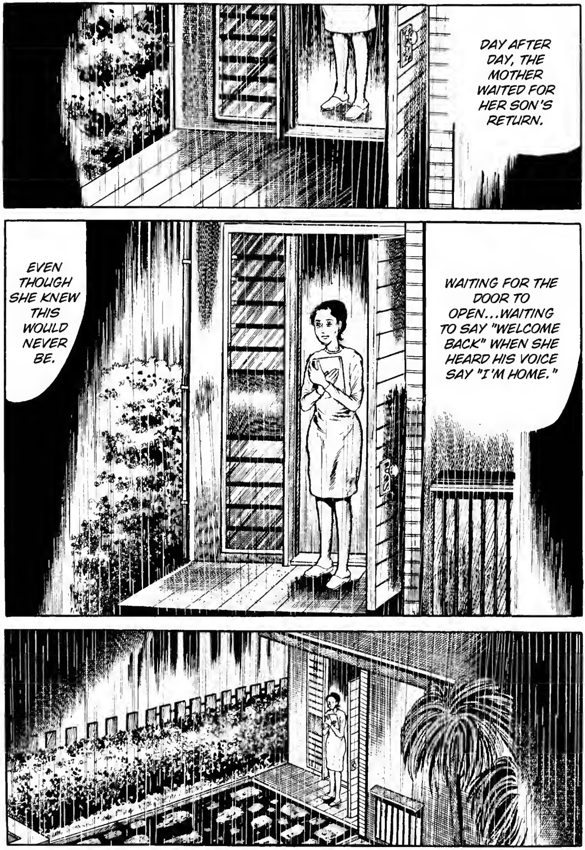

BACK FROM WHERE?
FROM THE FUTURE...
WHERE AM I?
SO YOU'RE YU, THE BOY WHO WAS WITH SHO?!
THIS IS SHO'S HOUSE! I'M SHO TAKAMATSU'S MOTHER!
WHERE IS SHO? I-ISN'T HE WITH YOU?
I CAME BACK BY MYSELF...
WE TRIED OVER AND OVER...BUT THE OTHERS COULDN'T MAKE IT BACK...
SHO WANTED ME TO GIVE THIS TO YOU...
TH...THAT'S SHO'S NOTEBOOK!
NOTE BOOK

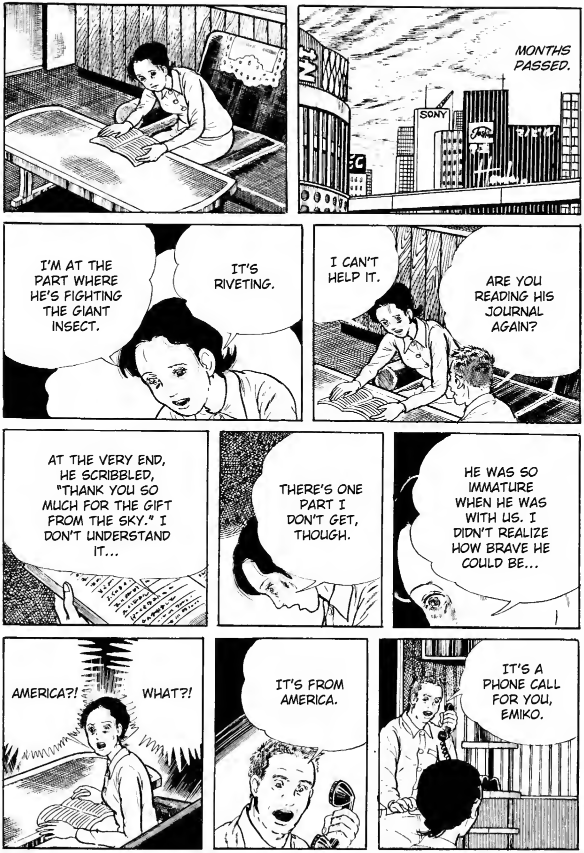

HEY!
IT'S MY TRICYCLE!
I HAVE TO GO HOME.
GARA
GARA
YAY!
KATUMP
IT'S HIS HAND-WRITING...!
NOTEBOOK

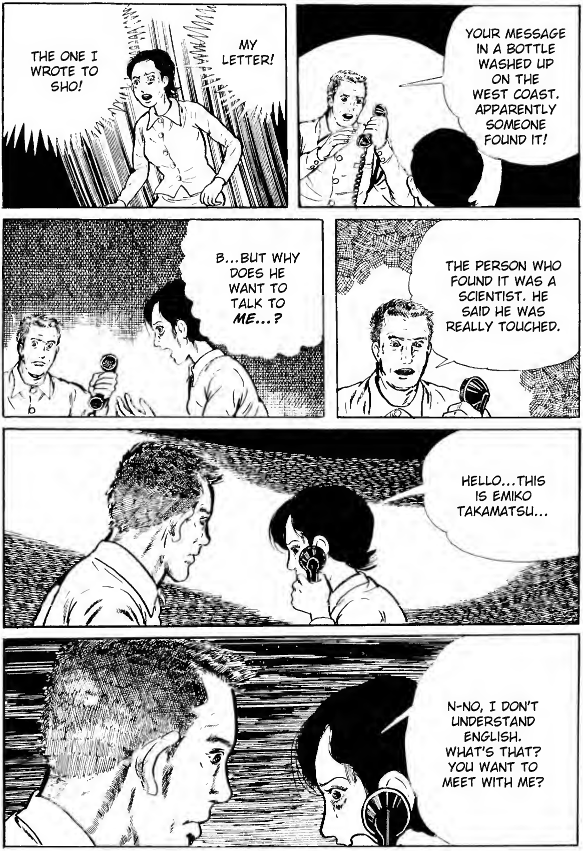

GARA GARA
ゴミ
HUFF... HUFF...
SCREE
I'M GOING HOME...
HEY KID, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

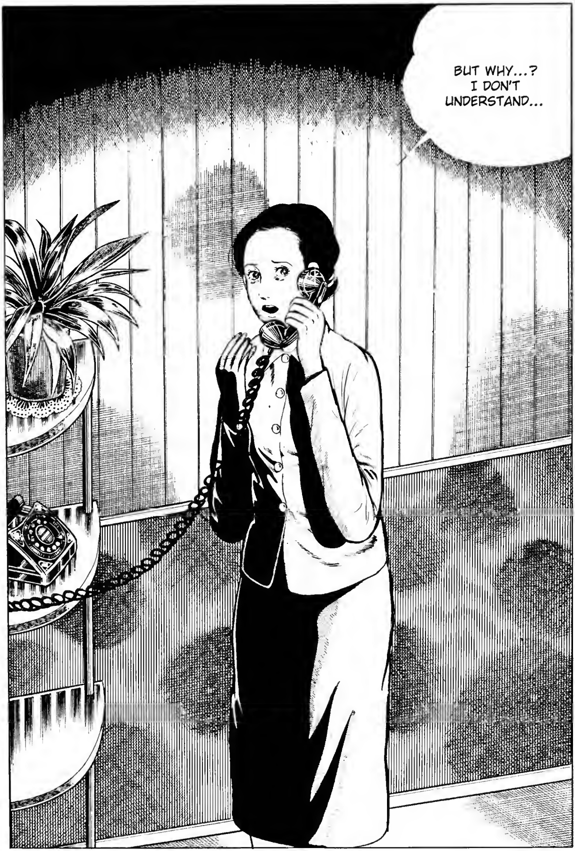

DO YOU NEED A LIFT?
NO, I CAN MAKE IT ON MY OWN.
WELL, ALL RIGHT THEN.
VRRROOM
HMM? OYASHIKI-CHO? OH, IT'S THATAWAY.
WHAT A STRANGE BOY.

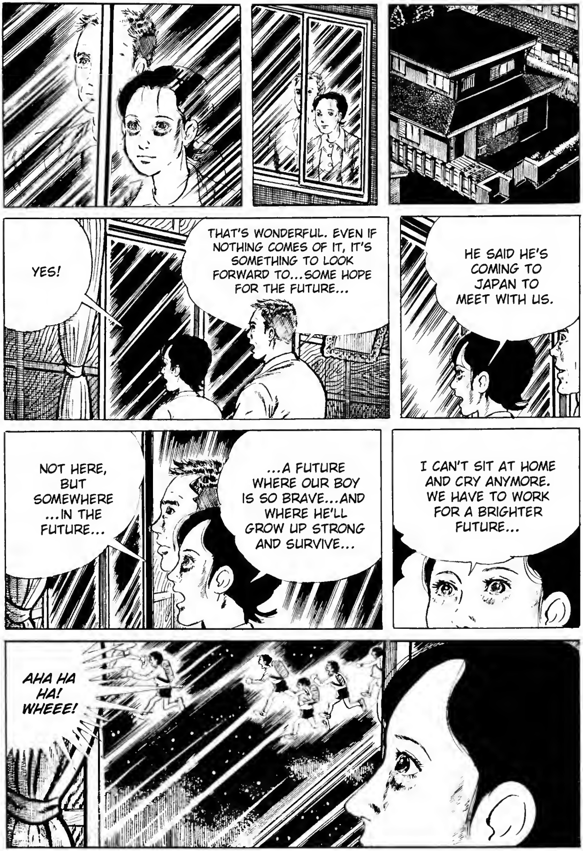


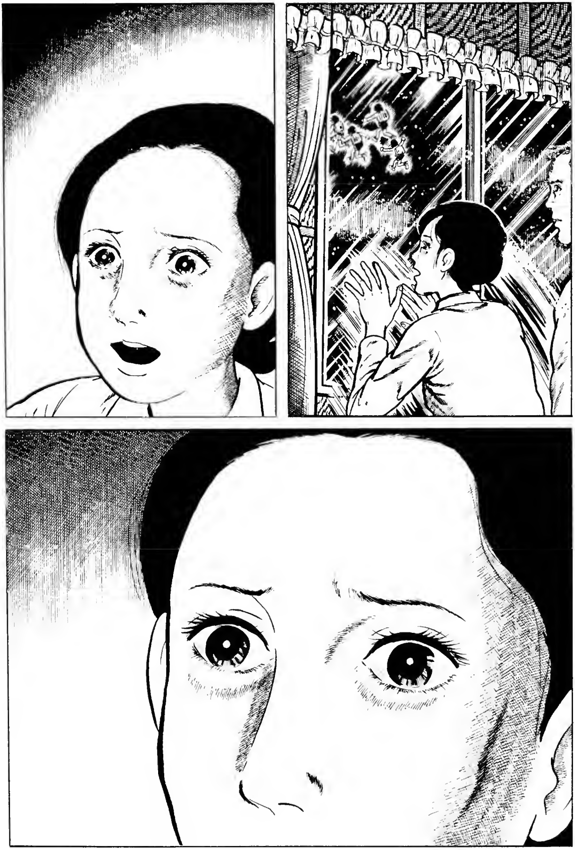

DAY AFTER DAY, THE MOTHER WAITED FOR HER SON'S RETURN.
WAITING FOR THE DOOR TO OPEN...WAITING TO SAY "WELCOME BACK" WHEN SHE HEARD HIS VOICE SAY "I'M HOME."
EVEN THOUGH SHE KNEW THIS WOULD NEVER BE.

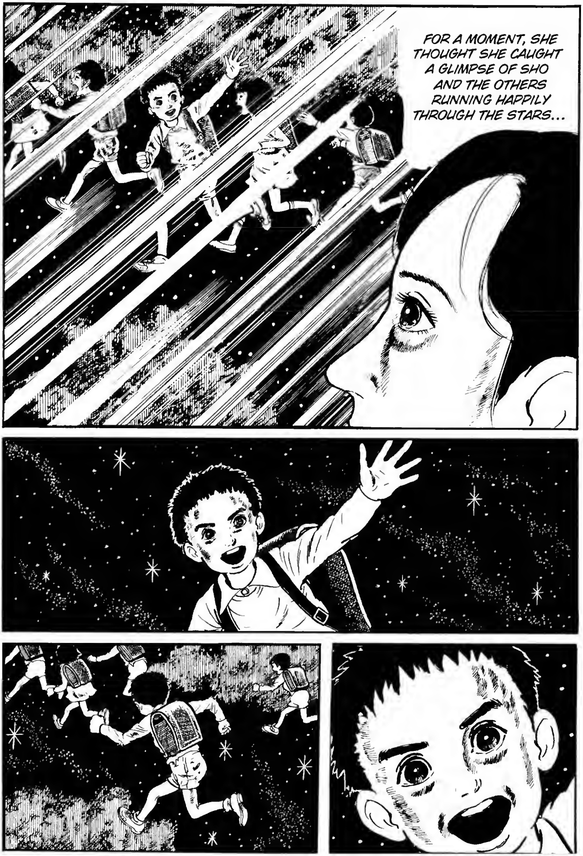

MONTHS PASSED.
SONY
ARE YOU READING HIS JOURNAL AGAIN?
I CAN'T HELP IT.
IT'S RIVETING.
I'M AT THE PART WHERE HE'S FIGHTING THE GIANT INSECT.
HE WAS SO IMMATURE WHEN HE WAS WITH US. I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW BRAVE HE COULD BE...
THERE'S ONE PART I DON'T GET, THOUGH.
AT THE VERY END, HE SCRIBBLED, "THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE GIFT FROM THE SKY." I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT...
IT'S A PHONE CALL FOR YOU, EMIKO.
IT'S FROM AMERICA.
WHAT?!
AMERICA?!

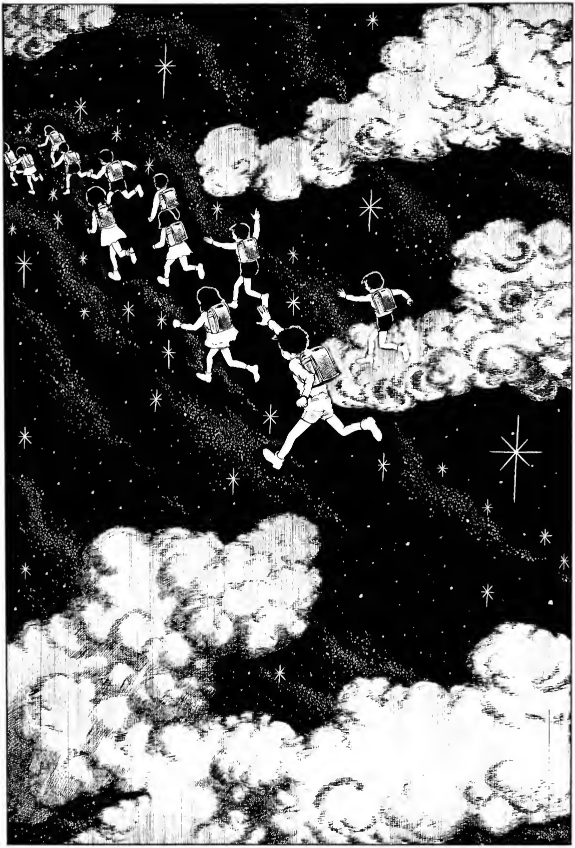

YOUR MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE WASHED UP ON THE WEST COAST. APPARENTLY SOMEONE FOUND IT!
MY LETTER!
THE ONE I WROTE TO SHO!
THE PERSON WHO FOUND IT WAS A SCIENTIST. HE SAID HE WAS REALLY TOUCHED.
B...BUT WHY DOES HE WANT TO TALK TO *ME...?*
HELLO...THIS IS EMIKO TAKAMATSU...
N-NO, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ENGLISH. WHAT'S THAT? YOU WANT TO MEET WITH ME?

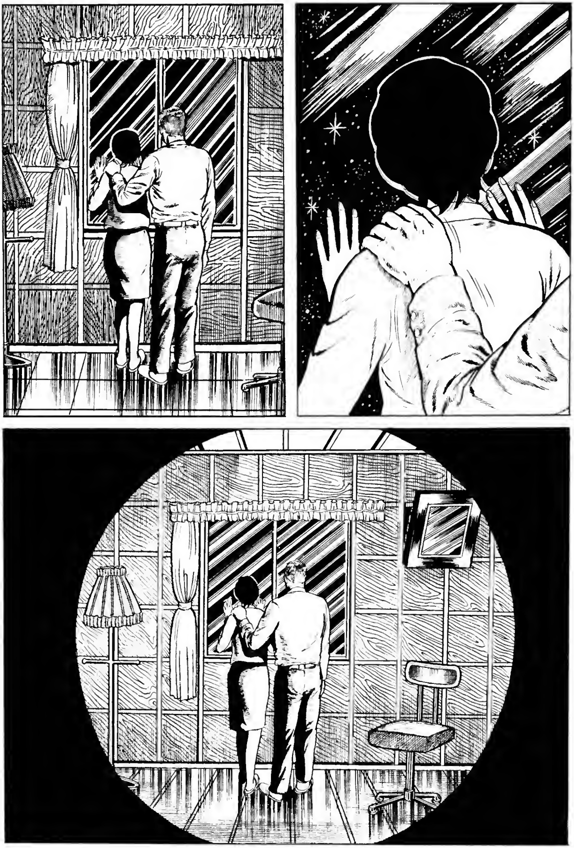

BUT WHY...? I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

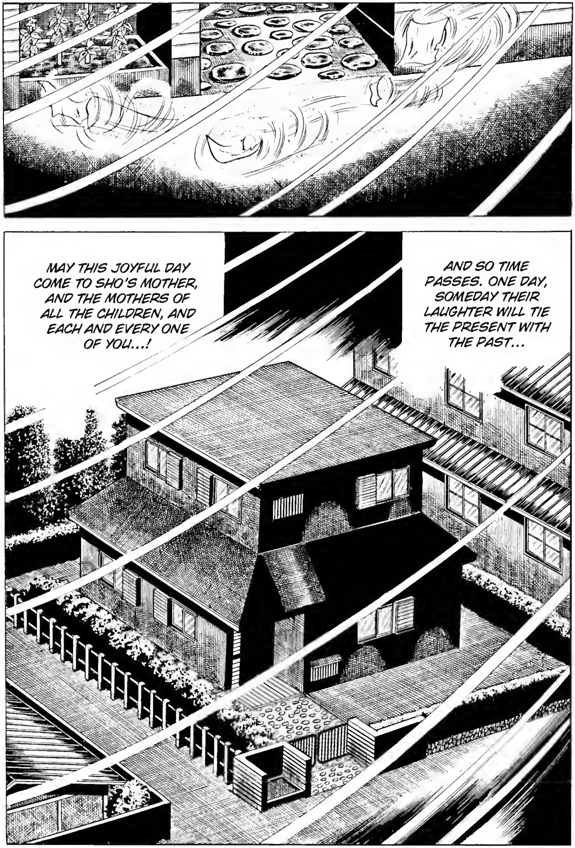

HE SAID HE'S COMING TO JAPAN TO MEET WITH US.
THAT'S WONDERFUL. EVEN IF NOTHING COMES OF IT, IT'S SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO...SOME HOPE FOR THE FUTURE...
YES!
I CAN'T SIT AT HOME AND CRY ANYMORE. WE HAVE TO WORK FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE...
...A FUTURE WHERE OUR BOY IS SO BRAVE...AND WHERE HE'LL GROW UP STRONG AND SURVIVE...
NOT HERE, BUT SOMEWHERE ...IN THE FUTURE...
AHA HA HA! WHEEE!




FOR A MOMENT, SHE THOUGHT SHE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF SHO AND THE OTHERS RUNNING HAPPILY THROUGH THE STARS...



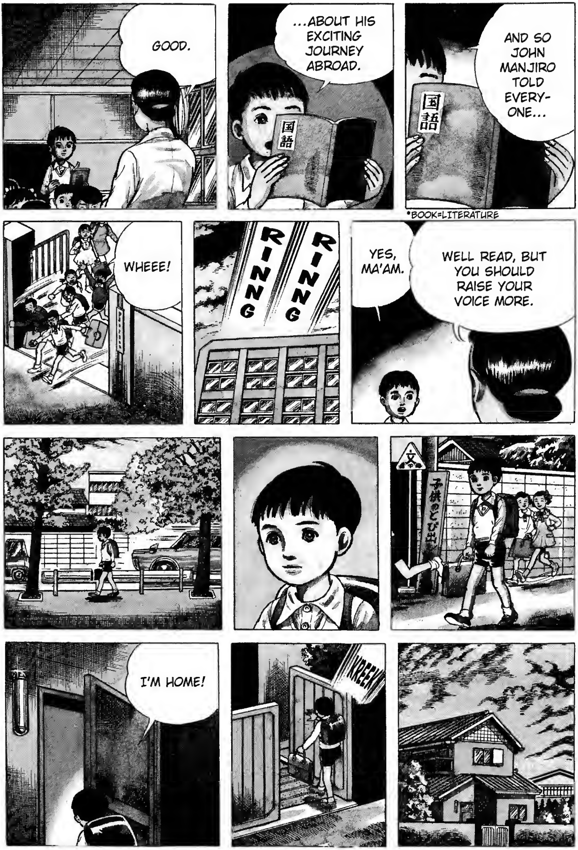



AND SO TIME PASSES. ONE DAY, SOMEDAY THEIR LAUGHTER WILL TIE THE PRESENT WITH THE PAST...
MAY THIS JOYFUL DAY COME TO SHO'S MOTHER, AND THE MOTHERS OF ALL THE CHILDREN, AND EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU...!

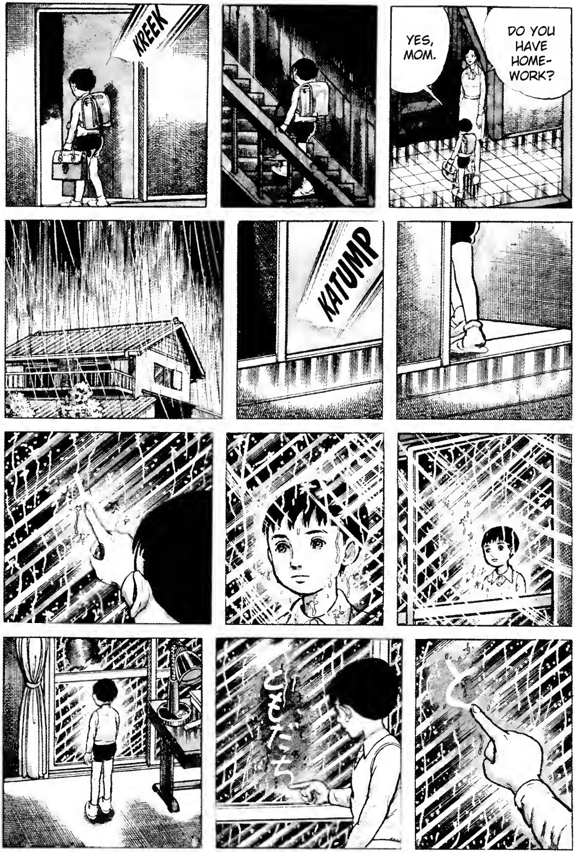
THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM: THE END

*The Drifting Classroom* was originally published in *Weekly Shônen Sunday* magazine from 1972 (weekly issue #23) to 1974 (weekly issue #27).

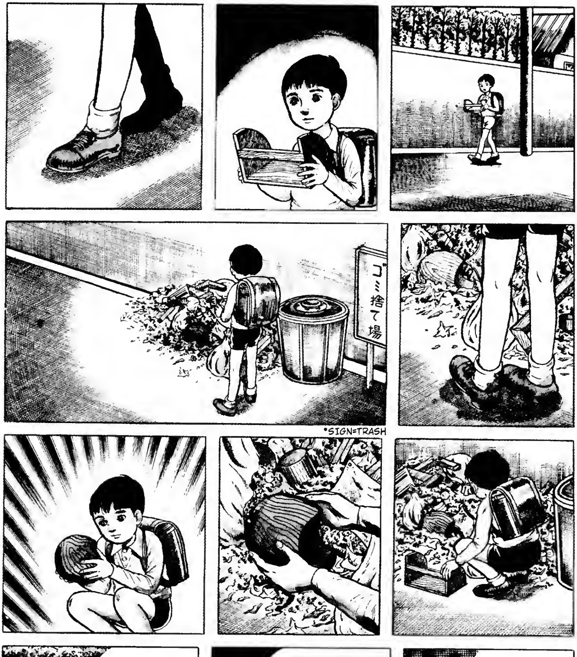
# THE WISH

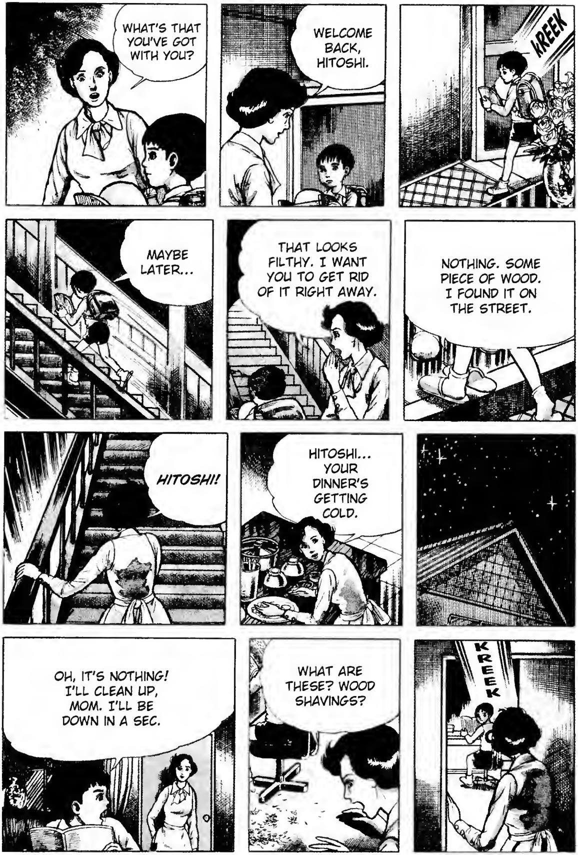

国語
AND SO JOHN MANJIRO TOLD EVERYONE...
国語
...ABOUT HIS EXCITING JOURNEY ABROAD.
GOOD.
WELL READ, BUT YOU SHOULD RAISE YOUR VOICE MORE.
YES, MA'AM.
RINNG RINNG
WHEEE!
文
子供のとび出
I'M HOME!
KREEK

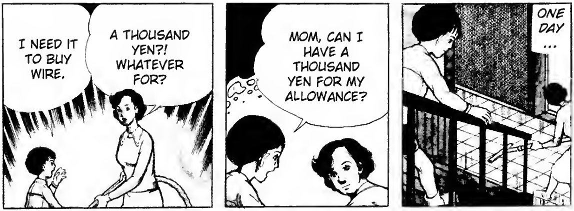
*BOOK=LITERATURE


KREEK
DO YOU HAVE HOMEWORK?
YES, MOM.
KATUMP
ともだち

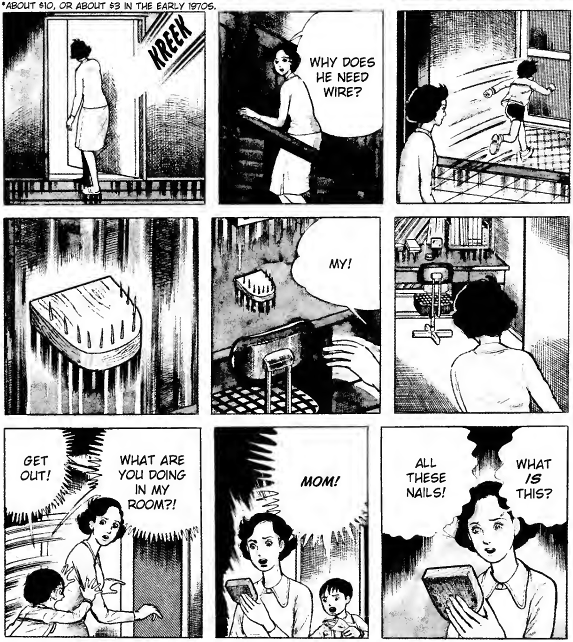
*WRITING="FRIEND"

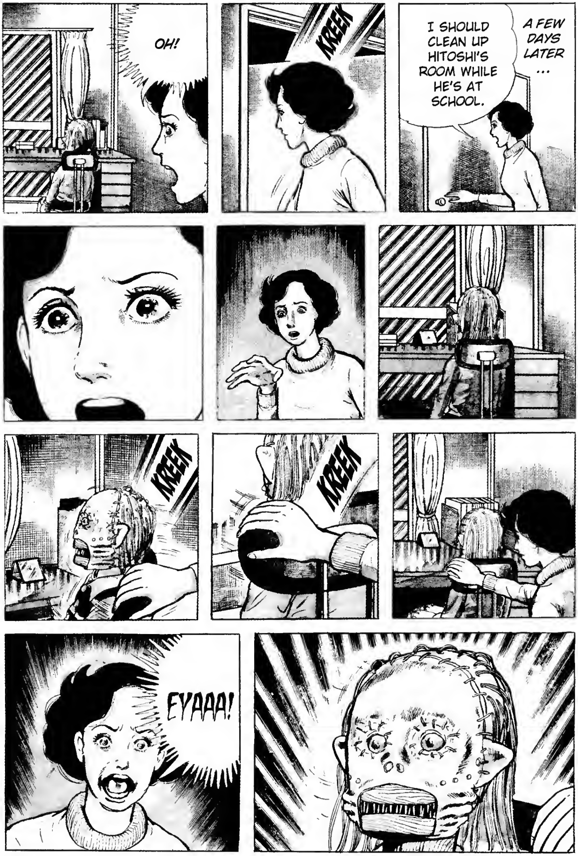

ゴミ捨て場
*SIGN=TRASH
I WONDER WHAT THIS USED TO BE.
HA HA...IF I GIVE IT A PAIR OF EYES I CAN MAKE A MASK OUT OF IT!
MAYBE IT WAS PART OF THE BANISTER OF A STAIRWAY.

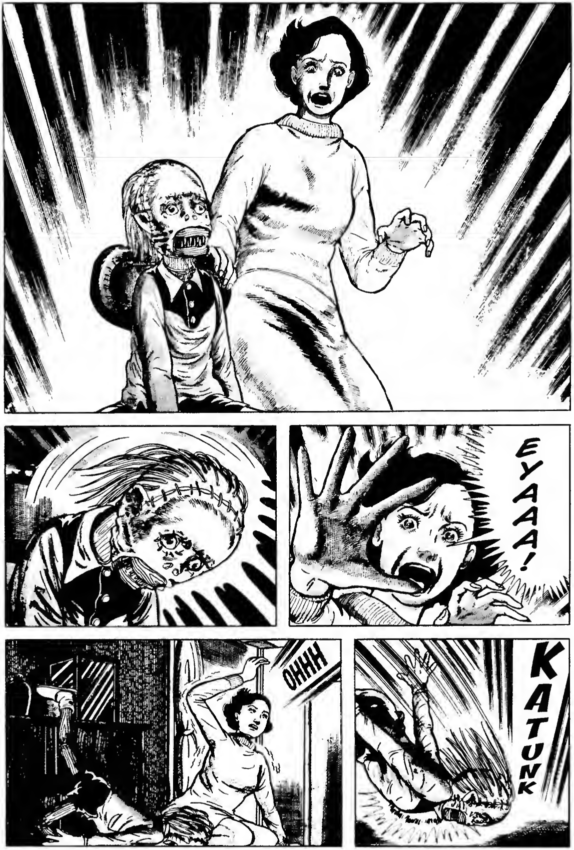

KREEK
WELCOME BACK, HITOSHI.
WHAT'S THAT YOU'VE GOT WITH YOU?
NOTHING. SOME PIECE OF WOOD. I FOUND IT ON THE STREET.
THAT LOOKS FILTHY. I WANT YOU TO GET RID OF IT RIGHT AWAY.
MAYBE LATER...
HITOSHI... YOUR DINNER'S GETTING COLD.
HITOSHI!
KREEK
WHAT ARE THESE? WOOD SHAVINGS?
OH, IT'S NOTHING! I'LL CLEAN UP, MOM. I'LL BE DOWN IN A SEC.

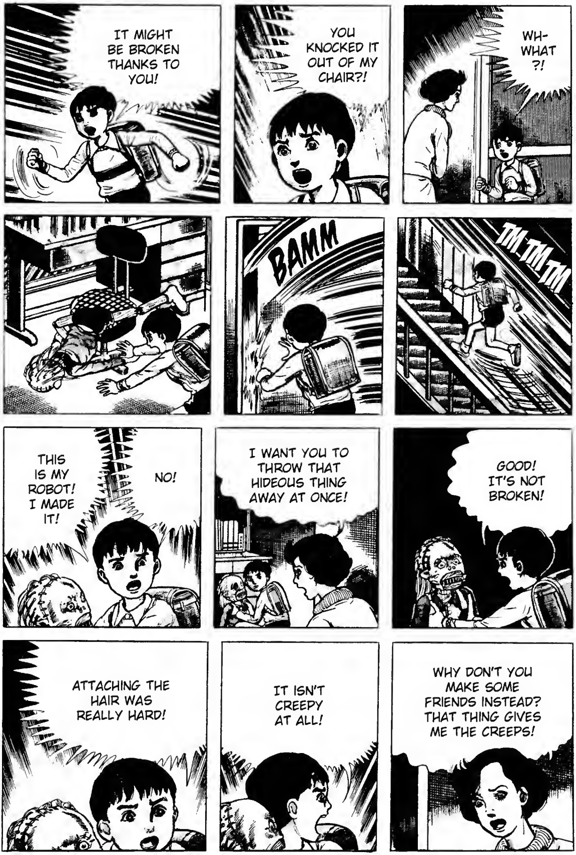

ONE DAY ...
MOM, CAN I HAVE A THOUSAND YEN FOR MY ALLOWANCE?
A THOUSAND YEN?! WHATEVER FOR?
I NEED IT TO BUY WIRE.

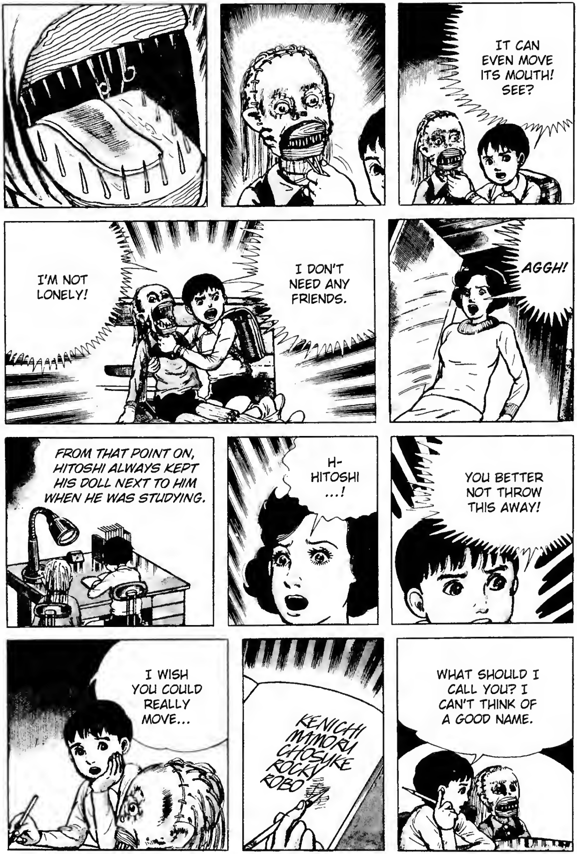
*ABOUT $10, OR ABOUT $3 IN THE EARLY 1970S.

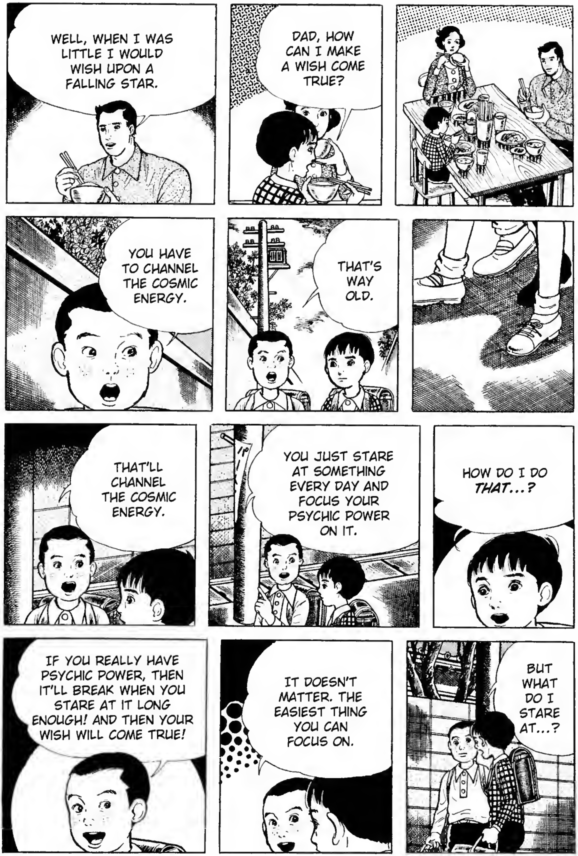

WHY DOES HE NEED WIRE?
KREEK
MY!
WHAT *IS* THIS?
ALL THESE NAILS!
MOM!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY ROOM?!
GET OUT!

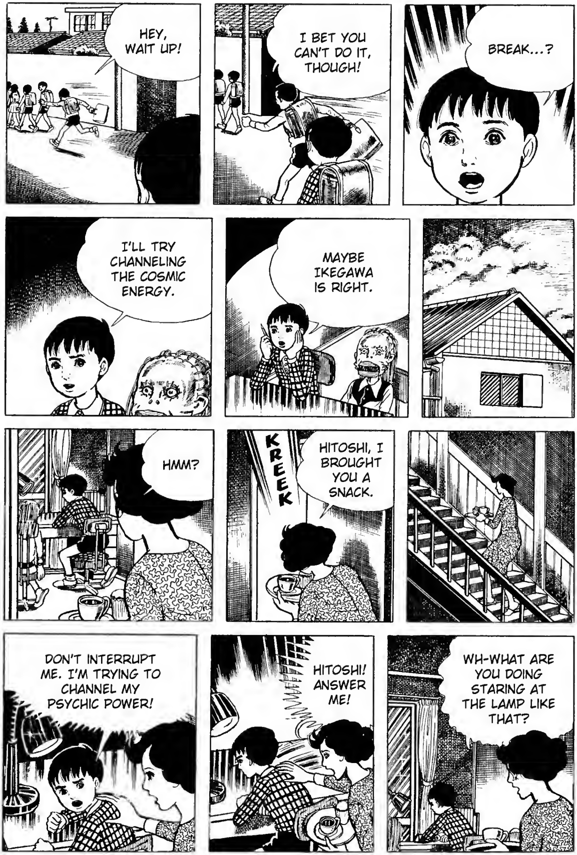

A FEW DAYS LATER...
I SHOULD CLEAN UP HITOSHI'S ROOM WHILE HE'S AT SCHOOL.
KREEK
OH!
KREEK
KREEK
EYAAA!

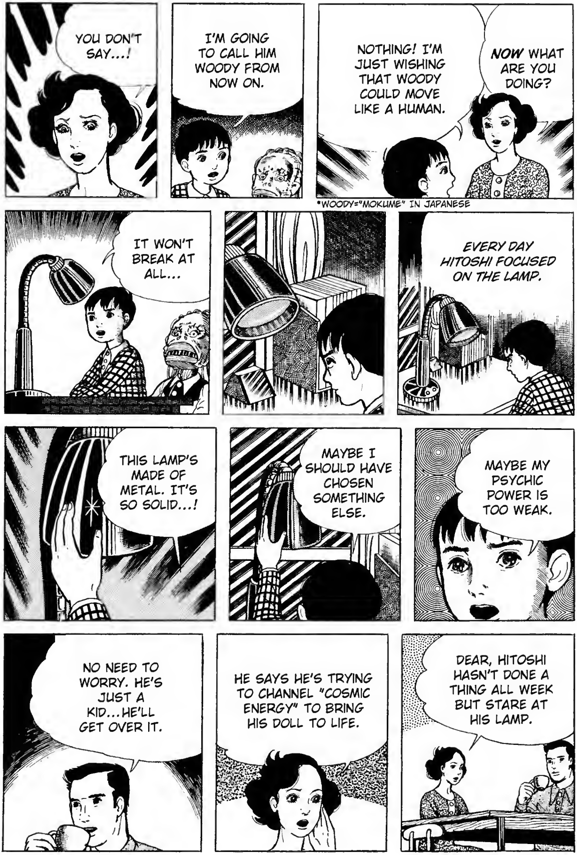

EYAAA!
OHHH
KATUNK


IT MIGHT BE BROKEN THANKS TO YOU!
YOU KNOCKED IT OUT OF MY CHAIR?!
WH-WHAT?!
BAMM
TM TM TM
THIS IS MY ROBOT! I MADE IT!
NO!
I WANT YOU TO THROW THAT HIDEOUS THING AWAY AT ONCE!
GOOD! IT'S NOT BROKEN!
ATTACHING THE HAIR WAS REALLY HARD!
IT ISN'T CREEPY AT ALL!
WHY DON'T YOU MAKE SOME FRIENDS INSTEAD? THAT THING GIVES ME THE CREEPS!

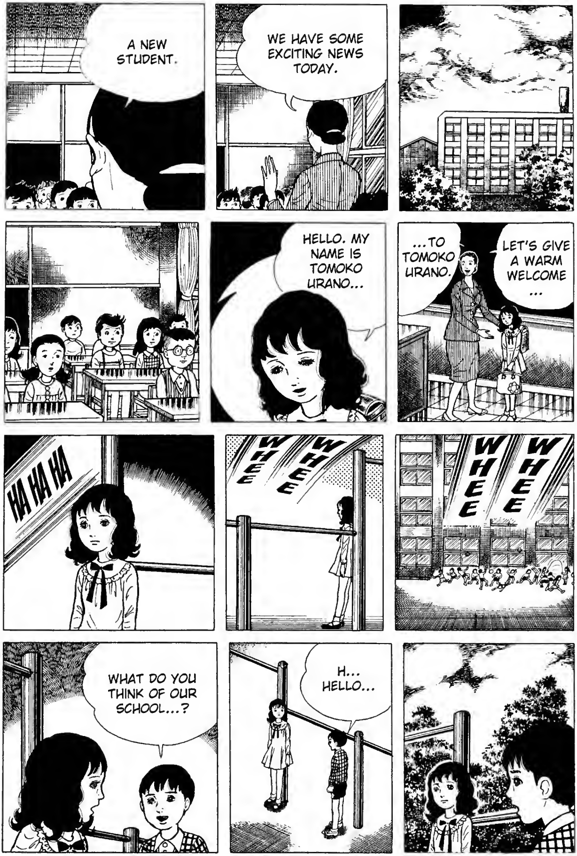

IT CAN EVEN MOVE ITS MOUTH! SEE?
I'M NOT LONELY!
I DON'T NEED ANY FRIENDS.
AGGH!
FROM THAT POINT ON, HITOSHI ALWAYS KEPT HIS DOLL NEXT TO HIM WHEN HE WAS STUDYING.
H- HITOSHI ...!
YOU BETTER NOT THROW THIS AWAY!
I WISH YOU COULD REALLY MOVE...
KENICHI
MAMORU
CHOSUKE
ROCKY
ROBO
WHAT SHOULD I CALL YOU? I CAN'T THINK OF A GOOD NAME.

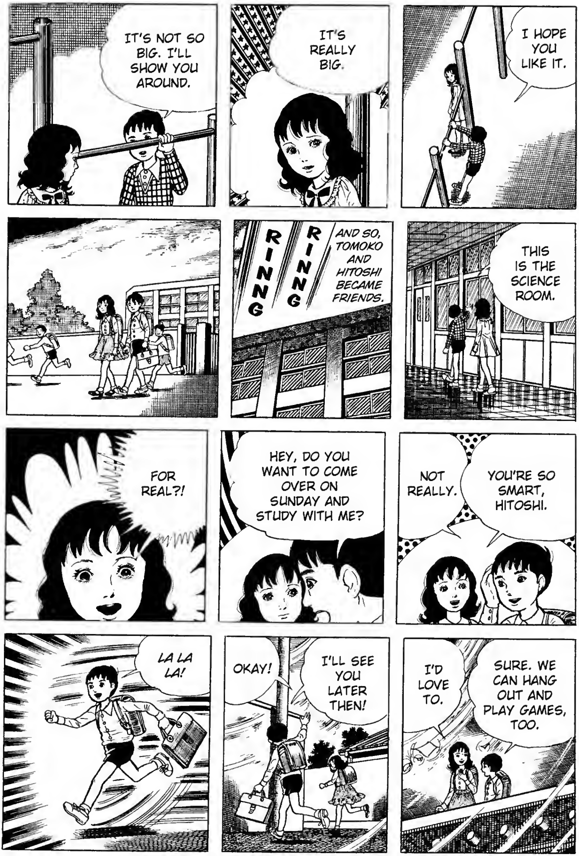

DAD, HOW CAN I MAKE A WISH COME TRUE?
WELL, WHEN I WAS LITTLE I WOULD WISH UPON A FALLING STAR.
THAT'S WAY OLD.
YOU HAVE TO CHANNEL THE COSMIC ENERGY.
HOW DO I DO *THAT...?*
YOU JUST STARE AT SOMETHING EVERY DAY AND FOCUS YOUR PSYCHIC POWER ON IT.
THAT'LL CHANNEL THE COSMIC ENERGY.
BUT WHAT DO I STARE AT...?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. THE EASIEST THING YOU CAN FOCUS ON.
IF YOU REALLY HAVE PSYCHIC POWER, THEN IT'LL BREAK WHEN YOU STARE AT IT LONG ENOUGH! AND THEN YOUR WISH WILL COME TRUE!

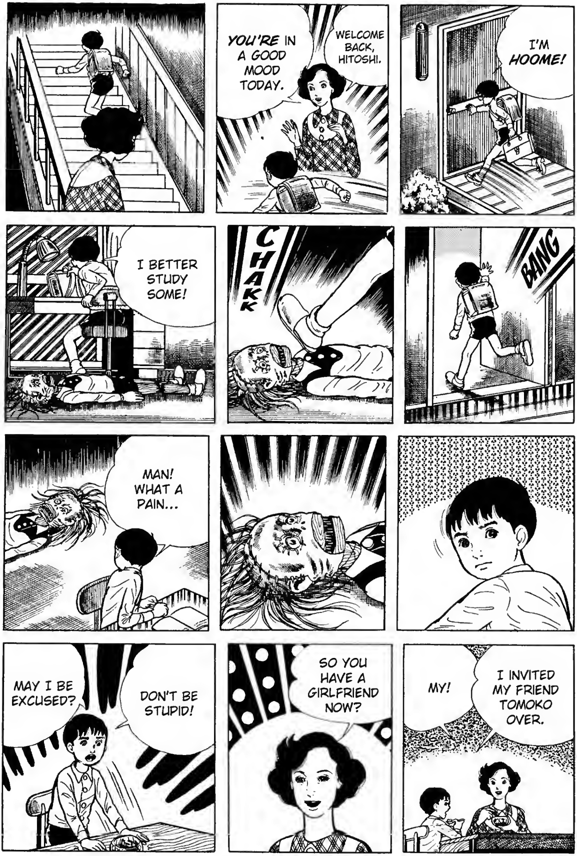

HEY, WAIT UP!
I BET YOU CAN'T DO IT, THOUGH!
BREAK...?
I'LL TRY CHANNELING THE COSMIC ENERGY.
MAYBE IKEGAWA IS RIGHT.
HMM?
KREEK
HITOSHI, I BROUGHT YOU A SNACK.
DON'T INTERRUPT ME. I'M TRYING TO CHANNEL MY PSYCHIC POWER!
HITOSHI! ANSWER ME!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING STARING AT THE LAMP LIKE THAT?

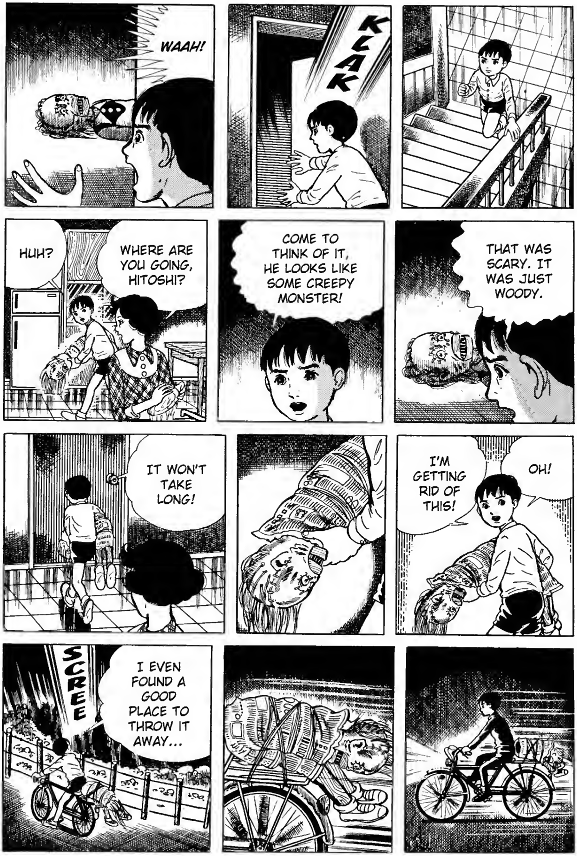

NOW WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
NOTHING! I'M JUST WISHING THAT WOODY COULD MOVE LIKE A HUMAN.
I'M GOING TO CALL HIM WOODY FROM NOW ON.
YOU DON'T SAY...!
EVERY DAY HITOSHI FOCUSED ON THE LAMP.
IT WON'T BREAK AT ALL...
MAYBE MY PSYCHIC POWER IS TOO WEAK.
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE CHOSEN SOMETHING ELSE.
THIS LAMP'S MADE OF METAL. IT'S SO SOLID...!
DEAR, HITOSHI HASN'T DONE A THING ALL WEEK BUT STARE AT HIS LAMP.
HE SAYS HE'S TRYING TO CHANNEL "COSMIC ENERGY" TO BRING HIS DOLL TO LIFE.
NO NEED TO WORRY. HE'S JUST A KID...HE'LL GET OVER IT.

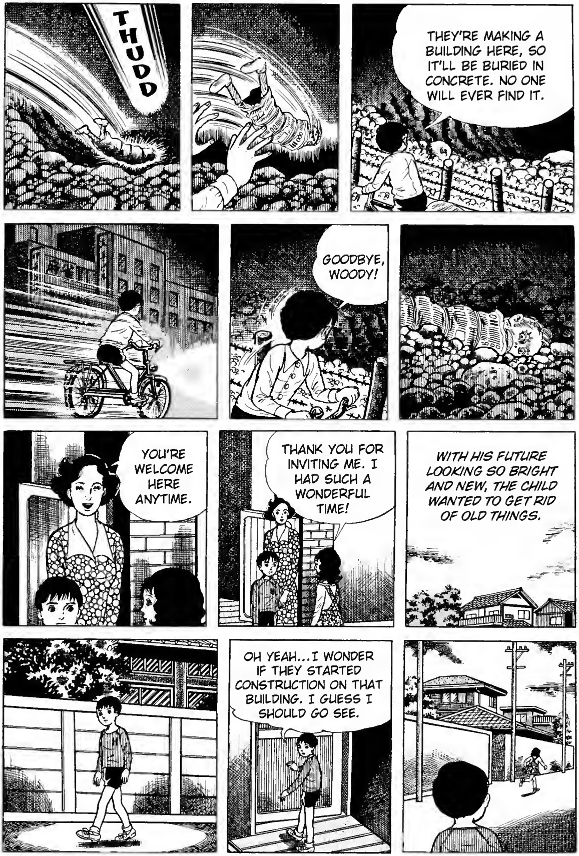
*WOODY="MOKUME" IN JAPANESE

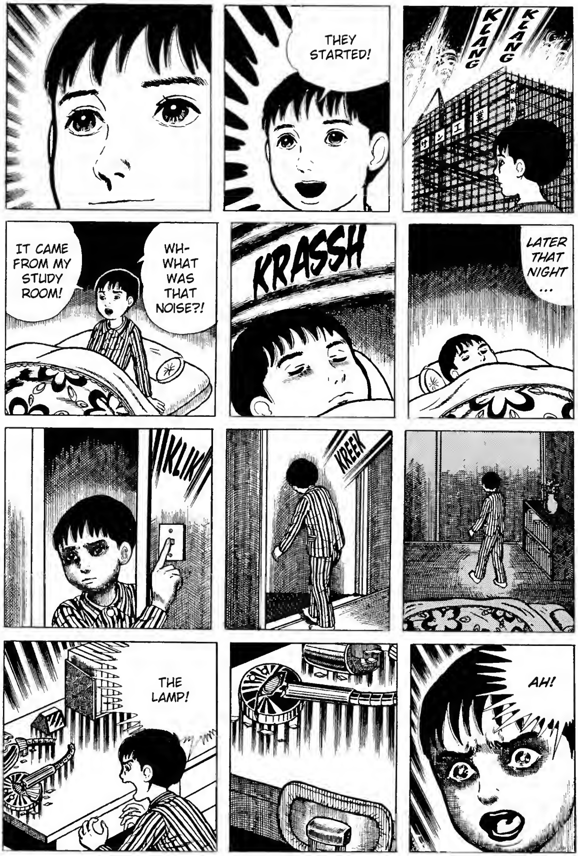

WE HAVE SOME EXCITING NEWS TODAY.
A NEW STUDENT.
LET'S GIVE A WARM WELCOME ...
...TO TOMOKO URANO.
HELLO. MY NAME IS TOMOKO URANO...
WHEE
WHEE
WHEE
WHEE
HA HA HA
H... HELLO...
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OUR SCHOOL...?

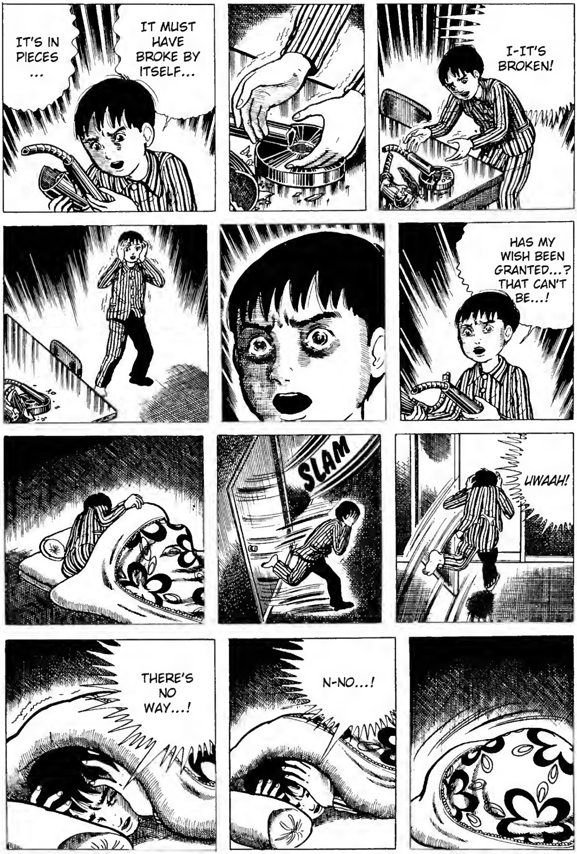

I HOPE YOU LIKE IT.
IT'S REALLY BIG.
IT'S NOT SO BIG. I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND.
THIS IS THE SCIENCE ROOM.
RINNG
RINNG
AND SO, TOMOKO AND HITOSHI BECAME FRIENDS.
YOU'RE SO SMART, HITOSHI.
NOT REALLY.
HEY, DO YOU WANT TO COME OVER ON SUNDAY AND STUDY WITH ME?
FOR REAL?!
SURE. WE CAN HANG OUT AND PLAY GAMES, TOO.
I'D LOVE TO.
I'LL SEE YOU LATER THEN!
OKAY!
LA LA LA!

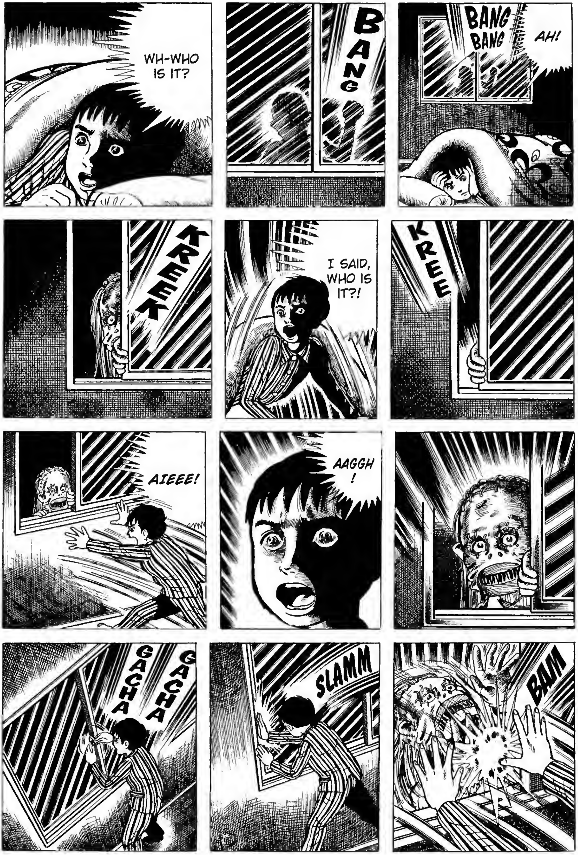

I'M HOOME!
WELCOME BACK, HITOSHI.
YOU'RE IN A GOOD MOOD TODAY.
BANG
CHAKK
I BETTER STUDY SOME!
MAN! WHAT A PAIN...
I INVITED MY FRIEND TOMOKO OVER.
MY!
SO YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND NOW?
DON'T BE STUPID!
MAY I BE EXCUSED?

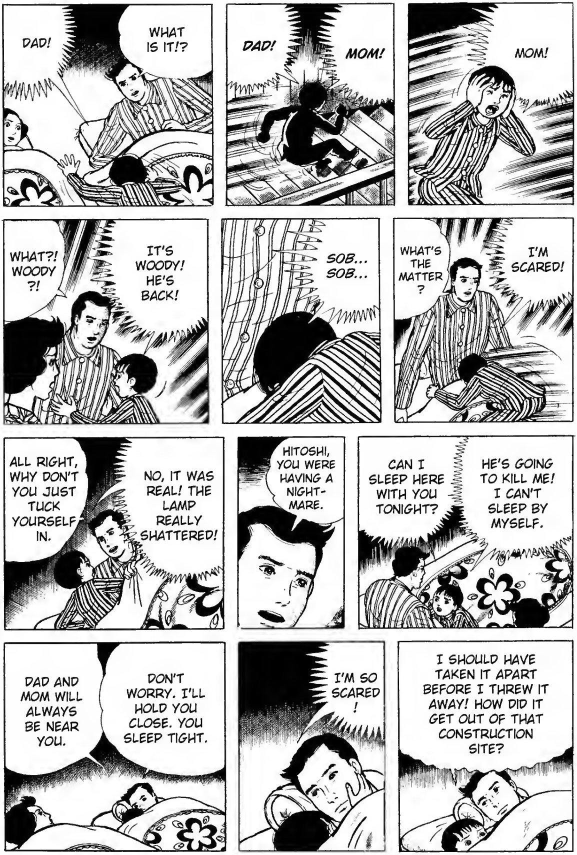

KLAK
WAAH!
THAT WAS SCARY. IT WAS JUST WOODY.
COME TO THINK OF IT, HE LOOKS LIKE SOME CREEPY MONSTER!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, HITOSHI?
HUH?
OH!
I'M GETTING RID OF THIS!
IT WON'T TAKE LONG!
SCREE
I EVEN FOUND A GOOD PLACE TO THROW IT AWAY...

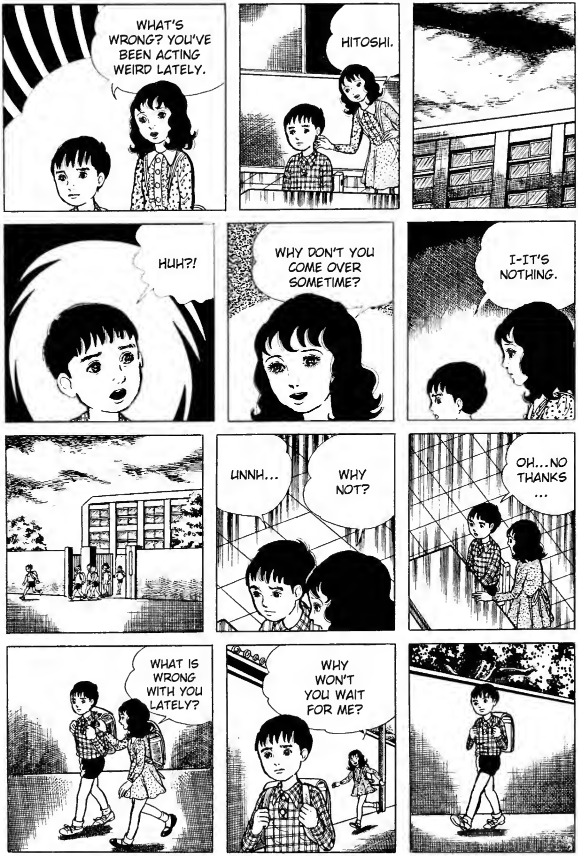

THUDD
THEY'RE MAKING A BUILDING HERE, SO IT'LL BE BURIED IN CONCRETE. NO ONE WILL EVER FIND IT.
GOODBYE, WOODY!
YOU'RE WELCOME HERE ANYTIME.
THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME. I HAD SUCH A WONDERFUL TIME!
WITH HIS FUTURE LOOKING SO BRIGHT AND NEW, THE CHILD WANTED TO GET RID OF OLD THINGS.
OH YEAH...I WONDER IF THEY STARTED CONSTRUCTION ON THAT BUILDING. I GUESS I SHOULD GO SEE.

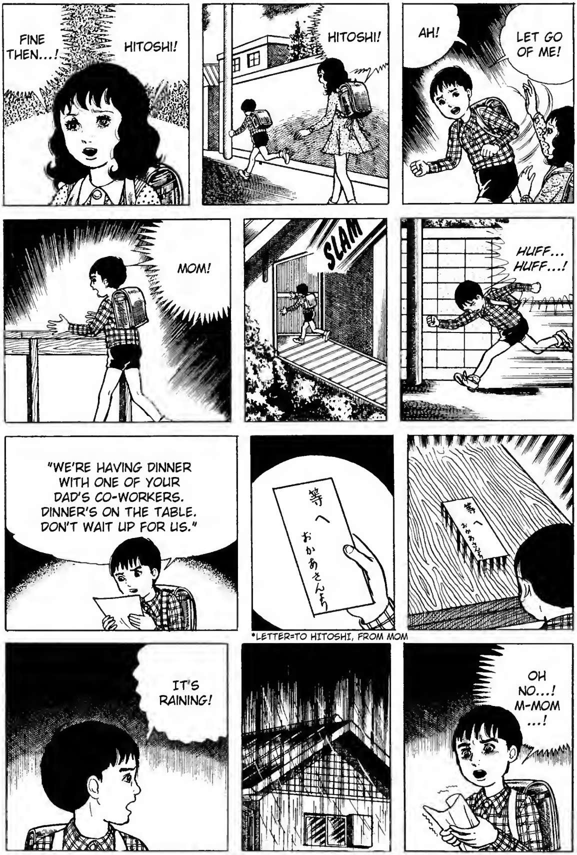

KLANG
KLANG
THEY STARTED!
LATER THAT NIGHT ...
KRASSH
WH-WHAT WAS THAT NOISE?!
IT CAME FROM MY STUDY ROOM!
KREEK
KLIK
AH!
THE LAMP!


I-IT'S BROKEN!
IT MUST HAVE BROKE BY ITSELF...
IT'S IN PIECES ...
HAS MY WISH BEEN GRANTED...? THAT CAN'T BE...!
UWAAH!
SLAM
N-NO...!
THERE'S NO WAY...!

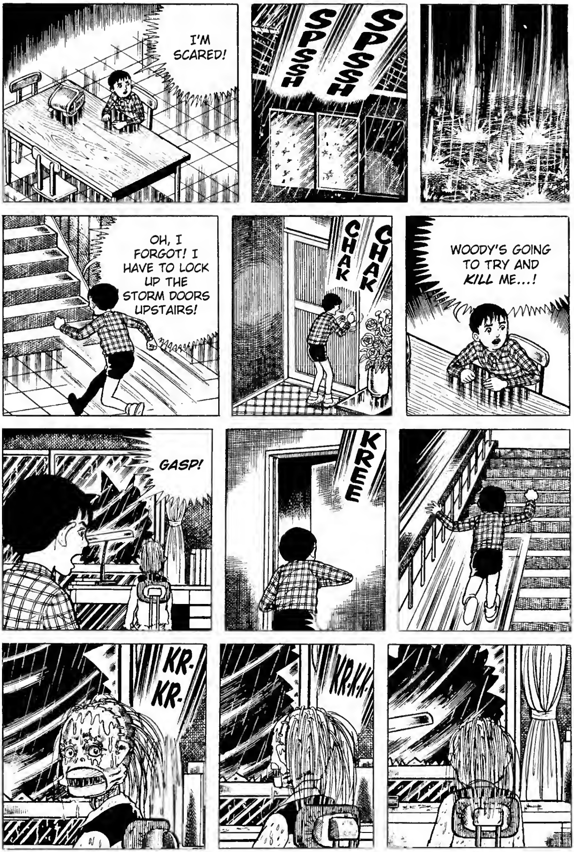

WH-WHO IS IT?
BANG
BANG BANG
AH!
KREEK
I SAID, WHO IS IT?!
KREE
AIEEE!
AAGGH!
GACHA GACHA
SLAMM
BAM

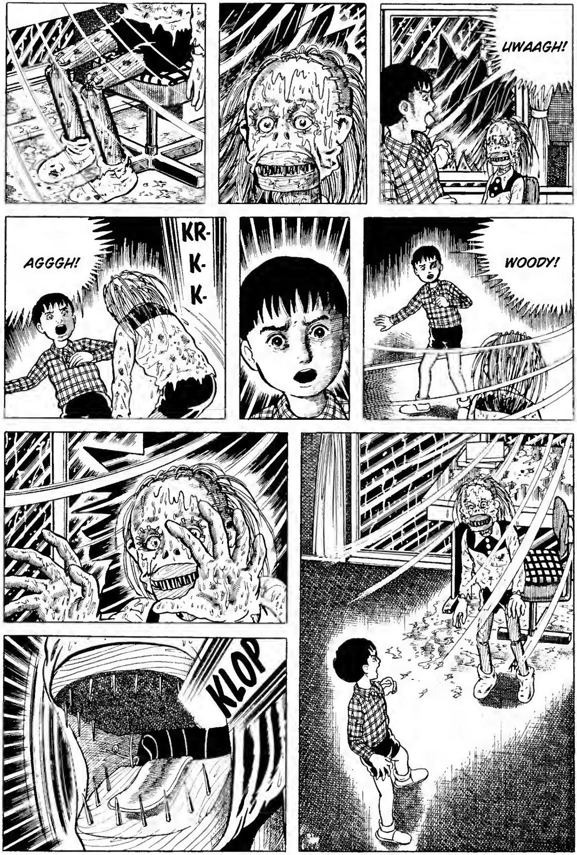

DAD!
WHAT IS IT!?
DAD!
MOM!
MOM!
WHAT?! WOODY ?!
IT'S WOODY! HE'S BACK!
SOB... SOB...
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
I'M SCARED!
ALL RIGHT, WHY DON'T YOU JUST TUCK YOURSELF IN.
NO, IT WAS REAL! THE LAMP REALLY SHATTERED!
HITOSHI, YOU WERE HAVING A NIGHTMARE.
CAN I SLEEP HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT?
HE'S GOING TO KILL ME! I CAN'T SLEEP BY MYSELF.
DAD AND MOM WILL ALWAYS BE NEAR YOU.
DON'T WORRY. I'LL HOLD YOU CLOSE. YOU SLEEP TIGHT.
I'M SO SCARED !
I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN IT APART BEFORE I THREW IT AWAY! HOW DID IT GET OUT OF THAT CONSTRUCTION SITE?

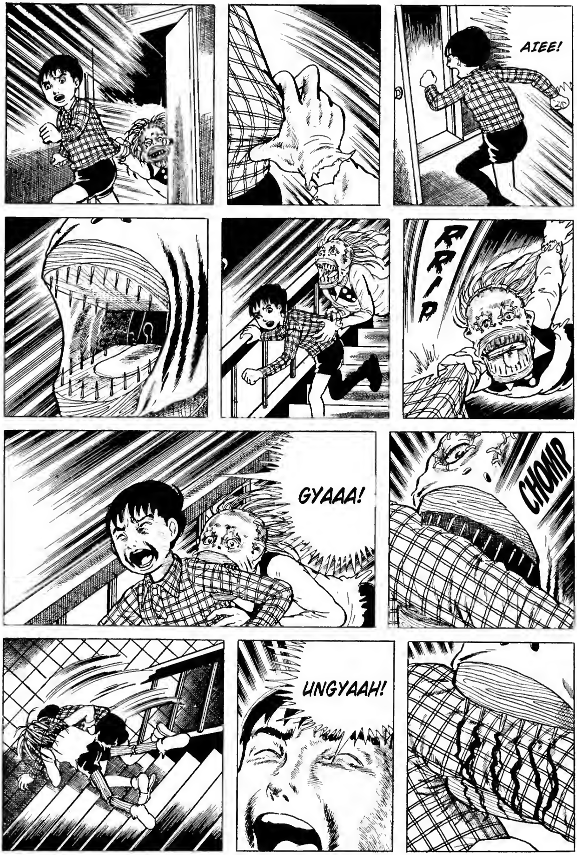

HITOSHI.
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD LATELY.
I-IT'S NOTHING.
WHY DON'T YOU COME OVER SOMETIME?
HUH?!
OH...NO THANKS...
WHY NOT?
UNNH...
WHY WON'T YOU WAIT FOR ME?
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU LATELY?

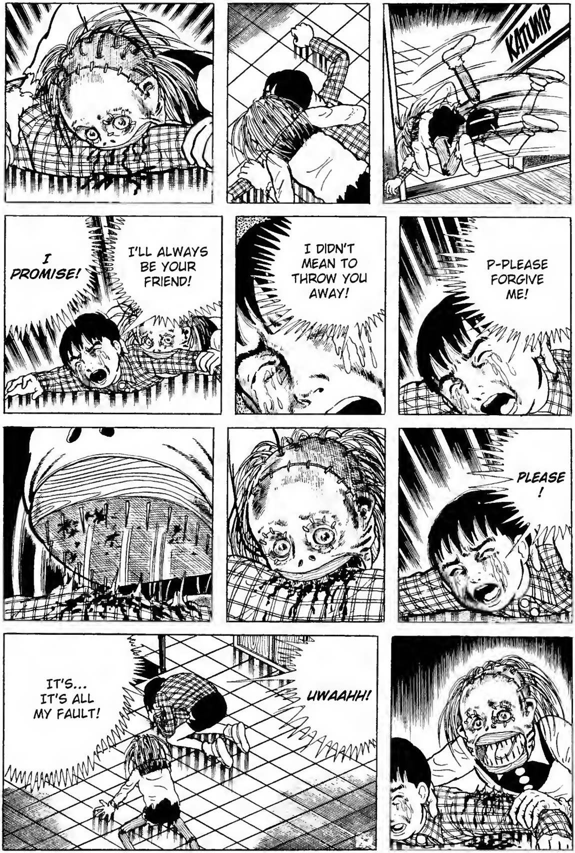

FINE THEN...!
HITOSHI!
HITOSHI!
AH!
LET GO OF ME!
MOM!
SLAM
HUFF... HUFF...!
"WE'RE HAVING DINNER WITH ONE OF YOUR DAD'S CO-WORKERS. DINNER'S ON THE TABLE. DON'T WAIT UP FOR US."
等へ
おかあさんより
等へ
おかあさんより
IT'S RAINING!
OH NO...! M-MOM ...!

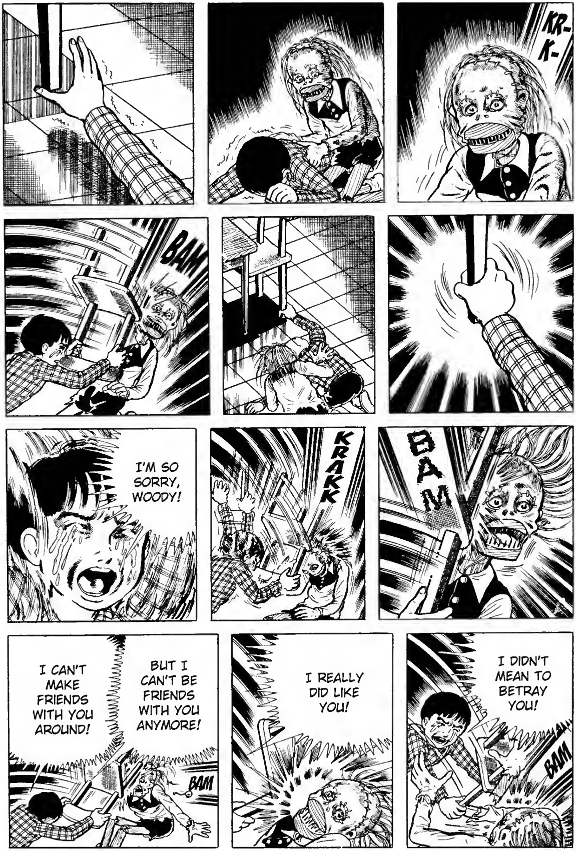
*LETTER=TO HITOSHI, FROM MOM

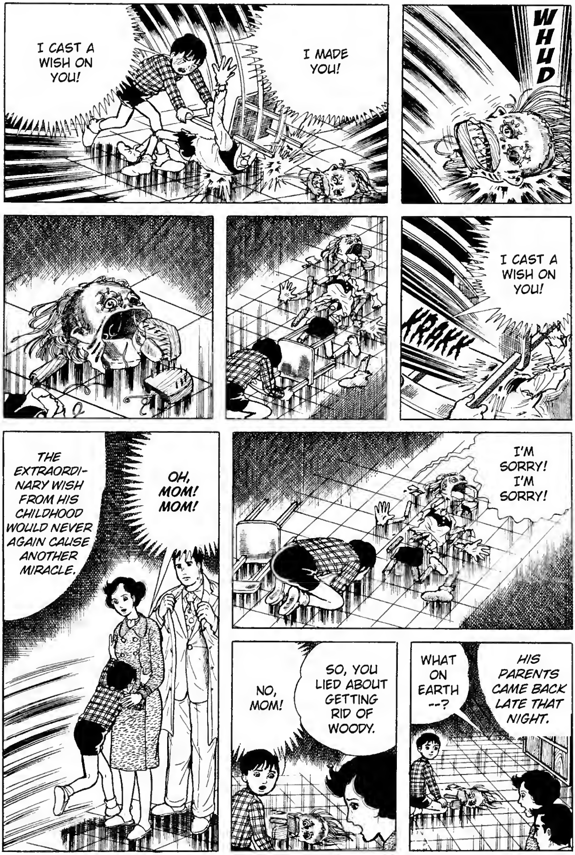

I'M SCARED!
SPSSH
SPSSH
OH, I FORGOT! I HAVE TO LOCK UP THE STORM DOORS UPSTAIRS!
CHAK
CHAK
WOODY'S GOING TO TRY AND *KILL* ME...!
*GASP!*
KREE
KR-
KR-
KR-K-K-


UWAAGH!
AGGGH!
KR-
K-
K-
WOODY!
KLOP


AIEE!
RRIP
CHOMP
GYAAA!
UNGYAAH!


KATUMP
I PROMISE!
I'LL ALWAYS BE YOUR FRIEND!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO THROW YOU AWAY!
P-PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
PLEASE!
IT'S... IT'S ALL MY FAULT!
UWAAHH!


KR-K-
BAM
I'M SO SORRY, WOODY!
KRAKK
BAM
I CAN'T MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOU AROUND!
BUT I CAN'T BE FRIENDS WITH YOU ANYMORE!
BAM
I REALLY DID LIKE YOU!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO BETRAY YOU!
BAM


WHUD
I MADE YOU!
I CAST A WISH ON YOU!
I CAST A WISH ON YOU!
KRAKK
I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!
HIS PARENTS CAME BACK LATE THAT NIGHT.
WHAT ON EARTH --?
SO, YOU LIED ABOUT GETTING RID OF WOODY.
NO, MOM!
OH, MOM! MOM!
THE EXTRAORDINARY WISH FROM HIS CHILDHOOD WOULD NEVER AGAIN CAUSE ANOTHER MIRACLE.

# The Nightmarish Imagination

## An Essay by Saburo Kawamoto

Childhood is full of fears. The darkness of night, the rustle of trees, strangers... and most of all, death. Children are made of fear.

But as we grow up our fear dissipates; we adjust to daily life and lose our primal fears. We may feel uneasy when we are alone in our house at night, in the dark, but for the most part, we no longer feel the same intense fear; that fear that we can hardly bring ourselves to remember. We lose that sense of overwhelming terror, and gradually, we become ordinary adults.

But Kazuo Umezu never lost his fears. He's still afraid of the night. He's afraid of the dark. As his fear grows, his imagination spawns new fears, and he ends up a captive of his own nightmare.

Umezu's work is terrifying. But that's not because he's trying to scare his readers; it's because he knows those fears himself. To adults an ordinary daylight scene might mean nothing…but to children, it has the power to explode into a terrible nightmare. A familiar street can suddenly turn into an alien place.

Umezu knows this kind of special fear. It was this infant fear that gave birth to one of the classics of manga, *The Drifting Classroom*.

"What if the world were to suddenly vanish one day? What if you were teleported to another dimension?" A grown-up would automatically file this premise away in the genre of science fiction, with all the condescension that it implies, but Umezu confronts it with dead seriousness and unblinking terror. The shrunken, confined world of school is suddenly connected to the awe-inspiring notion of the end of the world. The mundane explodes into the cosmic. With their power of imagination, children can make this leap, but the average adult is too enmeshed in everyday life.

One day, in the middle of a big city, an elementary school and its students suddenly vanish. On a fairy-tale level, the premise is reminiscent of the Grimm brothers' "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." Children are hardly part of the "real" world to begin with; most of their time is spent outside our vision, in mind-worlds adults cannot imagine. And (as our culture always warns us) adults must be careful with their children, sometimes careful to the point of paranoia, or our children may literally vanish, "spirited away."

From the children's perspective, the elementary school has been transported to a barren wasteland. The children eventually realize that they are still on planet Earth, but in the future. In Jules Verne's novel *Adrift in the Pacific*, the children drift to a remote island, but in *The Drifting Classroom* the children end up marooned in a future world. It turns out that the planet has been ruined by a horrible, unspecified disaster—a nuclear war or environmental devastation. By being sent to the future, the kids have survived the disaster, making their school a sort of Noah's ark.

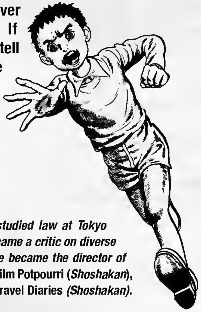
But whereas God protected Noah's ark, there is no divine intervention for the children in Umezu's story. If anything, their barren, future Earth has been forsaken by God. There is no water, almost no sign of life, and black clouds block the sun. The once-green planet has turned into a black ball of mud. In the sheer thoroughness of the world's destruction, its crushing finality, you can sense that Umezu must dread this possible future, the way the children themselves would. This is where his nightmarish imagination shines.

In this horrific environment, the children struggle to survive. They face one danger after another—a psychotic murderer, a flood, poisonous plants, giant insects and reptiles—all these are part of the vision of Kazuo Umezu. The children scream in horror, but rather than bringing relief, their screams only heighten their fears. Could the monstrous insect actually be a product of their fear-ridden imaginations? Umezu came up with his grotesque monsters and desert landscapes before *Alien* or the movie version of *Dune*. The scene where the students are attacked by robot dinosaurs anticipates *Jurassic Park*. Given that *The Drifting Classroom* was written in the 1970s, Umezu's originality is amazing.

The children's perils come not only from the outside. In desperation, they split into groups and end up killing each other. This part is reminiscent of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, as the children fight one another and die one by one.

It is moving to see Sho, Saki, and their friends struggle against these horrors—without relying on adults, without relying on God. Furthermore, Umezu doesn't resort to a sentimental ending where the children return home safely. They remain in the future, living—somehow—in their new world.

Although *The Drifting Classroom* was written over 30 years ago, the story has hardly aged. If anything, it's more relevant than ever. We tell ourselves that our modern world is more harrowing than ever, but for children in all ages, the fear is always there.



***Saburo Kawamoto** was born July 15, 1944, in Tokyo. He studied law at Tokyo University. After working as a reporter for Asahi News, he became a critic on diverse topics including literature, film, and urban theory. In 1959 he became the director of "Sound Break" on TV Tokyo. His recent books include* Showa Film Potpourri (*Shoshakan*), *and* Kafu and Tokyo. *His translations include* Jack London's Travel Diaries *(Shoshakan).*